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TREASURE

GERTRUDE S. MATHEWS

KE 2135

The gold prospector in Dutch Guiana often goes beyond the last isolated settlements up the Surinam River towards Brazil.

TREASURE

BY

GERTRUDE S. MATHEWS

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
1917

KE .2135

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JULY 10, 1940

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Published March, 1917

THE QUINN & BODEN CO. PRESS
RAHWAY, N. J.

FOREWORD

ONCE upon a time there was a man. He lived story-books, but, although he told them delectably, he had no love for a pen and absolutely declined to write them. Something had to be done. On one of his rare emersions from the Bush, as he made transitory passage through so-called civilized parts, to which he referred whimsically as people-infested geographical divisions, I extracted the greater part of the narrative set down.

I found him a human of exceptional species, *genus homo primitivus aestheticus,* perhaps the only one of his particular variety, whom it seemed desirable and natural to have speak to you in his own person. Although he protested that polite-book-reading-people would never be interested in what I view as an unusual, rich personality blended of masculine strength, widely diversified perceptions and extraordinary, almost femininely sensitive emotionalism, he acquiesced in my endeavor to write this story, with portions diplomatically fictionalized

but most of it in the manner, much of it in the phrase in which he told it to me, because of his own hope that there might perhaps be some pleasure in it for persons who would appreciate tropical outdoors and not alone the precious metal but the super-treasure he sought for.

G. S. M.

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The Author acknowledges the courtesy of Klein, Paramaribo, for illustrations on pages 80, 94, 117, 196, 220; also of Curiel, Paramaribo, for those on 13, 25, 232.

TREASURE

I

I EXPLORE

A SPELL of enchantment was upon me, woven of the manifold mysteries alluringly hidden in the magic Bush of South America, that most mighty maze of forest veined by mirroring water roads. Four years it had enthralled me. On an always absorbing quest of better values it had driven me from Trinidad to Paramaribo in Dutch Guiana. I am, I might say, a Searcher. There is nothing less than impertinence, one might almost say immodesty, in the accident of my being a mining engineer, looking for metals. For I really search for trove all too easily missed by the eyes of men, immaterial bits which need but comprehension to transmute into values inestimably precious, creative of the highest power. Nevertheless, one must make a living even when one is bent upon gaining more permanently enriching compensation for effort.

With a song in my system and its equivalent

in my pockets I had already acquired Bush properties elsewhere which had given up considerable gold. But I could not develop them further without spending a deal of speculative money—and I am most distinctly Scotch! So I had decided, things all over the world having come to a beastly mess which brought many people to their wits' end to know what to do to keep full of food, that I would go forth before I came quite to the end of my bread-and-butter fountain. It had gone on and on in a manner frightfully grateful and comforting. But it was no time to sit back and get old and ugly and dull. I had become an amateur savage. The more "sot" I became in my Bush-heaven ways the more I wanted to be able to continue them. God and none else has any idea how I love Bush life. It satisfies me. A very good idea when perfect satisfaction and bread and butter live in the same street? Yet less for a livelihood than a living wherein I could look and learn and laugh I was a gold miner.

It was sudden recollection that settled my determination to set my eye upon the most Surinam "topside," recollection of a very eccentric, piratical person called "Garlic Jones,"

who made a million and a half out
gravels in the far Bush forty years
this he went off to London and d
doses of whiskey! His eccentricity,
a passion for garlic so profound tha
sumed whole "cloves" as though t
radishes and thereby perverted his gi
which was George, consisted in seve
He had surrounded his Bush operati
mystery. He had never sold the bu
raw gold. He sorted it out in grad
When he was in need of money he w
huge safe in his London house and
lumps large enough to realize his an
expense. Some of the nuggets he
weighed over eight pounds (worth thr
sand dollars or more). Before and
made his big strike he engaged in
bickerings with the Dutch, whom he
Suddenly he sold his property to a bu
them, as though unable any longer to
into business contact with them if gettin
meant a loss. The mine was incorporate
mismanaged into bankruptcy. Much c
gold exchanged hands but almost no raw
was found, to the complete mystification
final disgust of the Dutch buyers.

Where had old Garlic's gold come from? I believed that he must have had another working place besides the one he sold, although so far as anybody knew all his gold had come from this one particularly rich strike. Of course this was mostly conjecture, but not quite all. It is always a dying sailor who tells where lost treasure is; it should have been a dying miner here. But it wasn't. It was a lawyer who administered Garlic Jones' estate who told me that his client had left a document in connection with a suit on a bill Garlic claimed had been settled, referring to a closed tunnel, unlocated, in which there was a box. Garlic maintained that the receipt in question was in that chest but the bill had to be paid again. Personally the lawyer had been much mystified by the tunnel sealed up with the box in it, and it struck me the same way.

The story fairly reeked of hidden treasure. I liked the element of mystery. And at any rate up in the hills lay the sources of his gold. was created in solid rock. This became integrated. Results: heavy gold at the deep point at the bottom of the creek-bed, G. J., stupid public, and Garlic dies chuckl leaving all his fortune to dear old hope

yarnful personalities who at least had had courage to attack the wonderful but defying Bush even if they had not wrested a competency therefrom. His money went to found the Midas Camp for Inveterate Miners, a home for old men who had lived in fervid dreams and failed.

And then?—— I sailed at eight o'clock one morning to seek to read the riddle of fortune written at the rims of the uninhabited savannas of that strange Dutch possession where he had flourished, the fourth country on the edge of the continent "south" from Panama, lying like one of several chips on the shoulder of the South American continent. I had long been interested in the locality. I would take a look at it and indulge my curiosity about treasure too.

Now, not being in Alaska, it is not etiquettish to cook one's own flapjacks and bacon. My first step after arriving in Paramaribo, which interested me chiefly as the starting-point of Garlic's dramatic exploits, was to look for a person capable of preparing strong nourishing food, who would at the same time refrain from stealing more than half of one's possessions. It never occurred to me in my most agreeable dreams that a camp cook who would not steal

from his master existed. Still, this is a contradictory old earth-footstool, and if one can catch a reasonably primitive person with the clean instincts which belong to the Bush one stands some chance of detecting unique spots in his character, even un-cook-like honesty. Please don't think that I expected it. Lumps of good luck do not usually occur to a mining engineer. I sallied suspiciously forth from the least unconvincing imitation of a hotel in the town into streets which happen promiscuously from one elderly house to another. I noted idly that the town was so tramlessly, lightlessly primitive, so be-dormered, be-tiled and weather-worn that it seemed rather superior to most—almost fit to live in. And I rediscovered cheap cottons, when the tropical sun had imparted its artistic coloration, to be part of poverty's advantages.

I was watching also for vari-colored-bebluejeaned aristocrats of bone and muscle who would serve me as mine laborers as I solemnly prowled along through a crowd excelled for color and oddity nowhere in the world probably, save perhaps in Port Said, with all the pure and every intermediate shade of humans. I had turned the corner of "De Hollandische

Winkel," a confectionery shop, into Saramacca Street, Paramaribo's Bowery, I remember, when a minute lump of particularly villainous looking niggerhood accosted me.

"Excuse me, sir, but if you are looking for a camp cook, I am the man you need."

I looked him over carefully. He seemed primitive enough, even violently primitive, and he had an attractive grin. Also I once owned a Clumber spaniel with the same look in her eyes. And she, even after one of her four legs had been blown off in a mine explosion, still remained a good and faithful and useful servant. So I remarked to him in my unfortunate thinking-aloud manner.

"You've got Fairy's eyes, and only two legs. If you are up at the hotel within the next hour, I will employ you as my camp cook and either make you a good one or break your neck."

"I don't know about the fairy part, sir, but I'll be much obliged, sir, if you'd just do the same as you say." And grinning, he bandy-legged up the road.

Having gone out hunting for a camp cook and having found something that said it was willing to chance its life as one, I returned after a leisurely stroll to the hotel, contemplat-

ing what, exactly, I should order him to do first. On arriving, I inquired if he had shown up.

A terrified servant replied, "Indeed he has, sir. He is in the yard."

From the back door I perceived my bandy-legged brigand seated upon an upturned flower-pot, gloatingly sharpening my extra large Spanish machete. He greeted me in the most condescending manner.

"As soon as I have a proper edge on this fine knife, sir, I do not think that there will be any trouble around our camp."

In his most unusual address I had my first inkling that I had discovered a servant who was willing and competent to take on his minute shoulders the responsibility of settling argumentative as well as culinary troubles of existence.

"What's your name?" I demanded.

His demeanor was a little fierce. "Bantam Carr, sir. I am, sir, a *Barbadian.*" When he spoke his name he seemed to dare me to smile. His explanation of his nativity, indescribably proud, was evidently intended to support his dignity.

"I'll call you Ban," I decreed.

"Quite right, sir," he rejoined.

He was good enough to allow me to show him my worldly possessions in kind and cash. Then, inquiring our destination, the number of men we would need and various highly significant details of how I liked personally to be served, he informed me that the best thing I could do would be to go to the Club for a cool drink.

"In three days' time, at six in the morning, we will be leaving town, sir. Leave it to me, sir."

Was it hypnotism or was it latent instinct that caused me to hand him a sack of money with the remark that I should like to make the first part of our trip by train and that I would trust to him to select good workmen? At any rate, he did not approve of my approach to minute details.

"Excuse me, sir, I have been in the Bush since I was ten years old, sir, and I have worked for a few sensible gentlemen, and I understand perfectly, sir, that if I do not give satisfaction my neck is to be broken."

Utterly resigned and mildly hopeful I ambled off to the Club. Three days later Ban, who wore my gigantic cutlass strapped round his

waist although it tripped him up now and then, shepherded a mountain of Bush stores, sundry table-napkin-covered-parcels, and eight excellent subdued niggers to the train which was to bear us into wild jungle, unpopulated save for primitive people and adventurous collectors of Bush products, mineral or vegetable.

One purchase, however, I did make surreptitiously, a tube of Colgate's toothpaste. For I was bound to start out right. This was my mascot; a perfectly new, full tube of toothpaste. Only when my tube grows very short and the contents need coaxing do wicked things usually happen to me. No super-considerate servant dogging my lordly steps ever so closely could prevent me from seeing about this personally.

As soon as the train started Ban became visible at my side. He handed me an unexpectedly fat bag of money, some extremely dirty pieces of paper with Dutch wiggles on them and remarked:

"The only inaccuracy in the accounts, sir, is a small bottle of whiskey, which may, of course, have to be charged against me. But at the same time, sir, by the time I have finished discussing the freight-rate with the train con-

ductor, you might be pleased to consider it a present."

Now I do my best to be honest, but Ban appeared to take no serious note of my expostulations. He terminated the argument by handing me a whistle and instructing me to blow it sharply when I needed anything. I had a queer sensation. In my quaint career I have pawned articles, but until that moment I had never had the feeling of having gone myself in pawn—It happened sometime ago and Ban is still the only thing on the round earth that I am frightened of.

When we got off the train at Niewdam, a regiment with big boxes, little grips, huge sacks and shoe trunks, I noticed Ban in a palpably heated argument with the train conductor. He diplomatically edged nearer to him and just as the train was pulling out I heard him say:

"Quick! Get out of sight before the Boss sees you. You are a fearful drunk man. He's a bit hasty, not the sort to stand for any foolishness like that. I won't be hard on you and tell him that you were too tight to count the packages of freight right. And here's your signed receipt anyway, for everything in per-

fect order. Only hand me the freight bill. And hurry. Because he's coming!"

To my complete amazement the conductor hurried madly.

With one eye totally blind with a wink, and a Satanic grin, Ban then sailed up to me. "Freight on four barrels of salt meat, sir, is surely well covered by a bottle of whiskey." This was a horrible fact. If this was the way Ban had been looking after my interests since he took charge of the funds I must owe a lot of people a lot of money. This disturbed me. Yet in this case, taking the local freight rates into consideration as soon as I was allowed to know them, my conscience was greatly soothed. But after the stores had all been collected and safely housed under one of my large tarpaulins I was endlessly surprised to see Ban produce a man-sized flask. And with the usual "Excuse me, sir," he then drank to the success of the trip.

"But, Ban, where did you get the whiskey?"

"Excuse me, sir, but did you think I could waste your good unwatered whiskey on a Dutchman? What he was drinking wouldn't be known as spirit in Barbados. The brown swamp water in this district is a convenient color. And I'm sure the cork smelt good. I saw

Mr. Bush Nigger.

deserted. Washing implements and clothes lay about.

Ban pointed to them. "Heard us coming, of course. They are probably watching us now, sir, from the Bush."

I could not discern a human sign. Everything was still; but further up the path, as we rounded a turn, a bucket, an immeasurably precious object among these primitives, rolled down the hill to our feet as its owner, a woman with a fat baby slung from her shoulder over her hip, ran fleetly up the trail to the entrance of the village. Foreigners have the evil eye, make *obeah*.

Following up the sandy knoll we passed through the informal gate above which a palm-leaf broom acts as an evil-spirit-dispelling guard, a custom copied from the Indians. We entered a thatched and clean-swept town where "the square" and "the church" were as prominent as in any New England village. It was neat as any such hamlet too, albeit the little houses with plaited sides and splendidly carved doors were so antipodal architecturally. I reflected that the spirit worship practised before the fat little clay Gaddo-image was probably not so very dissimilar from the religion of the

days of witchcraft in North America. Certainly this habitation of run-away-to-the-bush slaves, who in two hundred years have reverted to tidy barbarism, at once endeared itself to my eye. I followed Ban through twisting lanes between charming brown shelters irregularly placed. Before almost every house we met a little group of objects apparently set with some care, a gin bottle, a shard, or a calabash full of quite obviously over-ripe delicacies. We saw nobody at first. A mangy dog or two and some oddly constructed chickens seemed to be running town and the "jumbies" or spirits were kept off by propitiating flag symbols.

Ban took his position before an extra well-constructed house with noticeably fine wood carvings round its doorway and beneath its gable-ends and commenced a harangue in "taki-taki" to the audience of houses. This produced immediate results in the form of swarms of people emerging from all directions. He showed not the slightest interest in them but continued jabbering. His oration lasted fully five minutes.

Then an old white-haired negro appeared, tottering out of the hut before which Ban had purposely taken his position. Ban stopped. I

saw that the old man, obviously the Chief, was blind. He must have been a real personality to have retained, among people with whom generally physical superiority determines leadership, his high position. All the people stood back, evidently with deep respect. A young girl placed a splendidly carved wooden stool for him to sit on in the thick shade of a breadfruit tree. We, too, having been provided with stools, Ban dexterously approached the subject of the amount for which the old Chief would undertake the transportation of a hundred loads from the River road to the head of Blackwater Creek. I hadn't the faintest idea where Blackwater Creek was myself. But Ban's neck being at stake and I having by now considerable confidence in him, did not let a mere detail like that disturb me. At a dollar a load things were finally settled, and we proceeded leaf by leaf to distribute free tobacco. A package which Ban had been treasuring along the trail and which smelt interesting was impressively passed into the hand of the old Captain. I discovered later that it contained that priceless delicatessen, salt codfish!

Without any palaver except for a few friendly grunts we were soon on our way back to the

railway. Apparently every living thing in the whole town, with the exception perhaps of the chickens, had been press-ganged into the transportation crew. Minute, naked babies with distended tummies bustled seriously along. On arrival at the railroad, the scene was beyond words ludicrous. Ban, with unsheathed cutlass, addressed the crowd from the height of the mound of baggage. In awed silence these primitives listened while he promised them, if they dropped or stole the least of our belongings, the most frightful blight on the cassava, a rainy or a dry season at the wrong time, absolute Bush-blindness while hunting, and that every fish in their district should become uncatchable. One of Ban's "strong" points was that he knew how to manage all these people.

I shuddered to hear him prophesy slow torture or worse with benign assurance and an unsheathed cutlass. He wound up by rattling a large tin can, explaining at length that it contained the *dernier cri* of jumbie-ism (black magic). They evidently believed him. He jumped down, he hauled back the tarpaulin, he grabbed an already prepared fifty-pound package. As soon as a head was thrust underneath

that load's fate was settled, and I wonderingly saw it disappear into the Bush. Very soon there was nothing left but tracks in the sand where many humans had apparently pranced. Should I ever see any of them again?

II

THE DJOEKAS

TRULY the tradition of Garlic Jones and his treasure led me to quaint experiences! Before sundown I found myself again in the village where the Bush-nigger "caravan" rested for the night, and I became the proud owner of a clean new hut. On one side of it a new "house" was being built by about fifty yelling Bush niggers. In the rest of the fifty-house village babies were crying. The noise! But neither their home-building nor their babies stifled their curiosity. The whole tribe swarmed over to my camp and overhauled every bally thing. Now I am not fussy, but I objected to having my hair fingered and discussed while I was trying to write, although they are a very tame people and meant to be neither rude nor impertinent. They were merely frightfully interested in everything I owned, did or looked! To them I was a mine of enigmas. There are educated blacks who are fine persons but all most of them can do is to make black pottery, which is not so bad

when one realizes that they found out how to do it by themselves. They all begin by saying: "How many? Soappi? Tobacca?" which means, "How much will you pay, raw rum or black tobacco?" But beyond that their language was then obscure to me. Besides English, Dutch and French there were Portuguese words, added perhaps by those Jews who, too unpopular in Brazil, found homes in Guiana.

Somehow my too-pressing callers were eliminated. Supper on my camp-table and Ban standing by with a complacent grin, I felt that it was up to me to make a few politenesses to him. If he had not smashed all international records for diplomacy, he had at least proven no mean hand at making a try.

"Excuse me, sir, but if you will overlook the disgusting noise these naked savages will make, it will be a good plan, sir, if you will give a dance tonight," he rewarded my amiability by proposing.

I agreed somewhat gloomily. "Go as far as you like, Ban, but for the love of Moses let me sleep on my own ground tomorrow night. I hate this noisy town life."

"Believe me, sir, that is all settled."

I did not really believe him, although I tried

my best. From a corner of my hut he produced a new, shiny kerosene oil tin. As we were burning candles I mildly insinuated that I hoped he wasn't going to open a tin of oil on account of the difficulty of transportation. He smiled on me silently and remarked:

"Everything is in order, sir." I had learned that he always said this when he did not want to answer. And he proceeded to open the can, utterly ignoring me. He then arranged a blanket over the doorway. Out of a microscopic tin trunk called a "trommel," locked with an enormous padlock, he produced like a conjurer a bottle of white pepper, a bottle of red pepper, and a small glass jam pot containing bluestone (vitriol). With a practised hand he shook the contents of half of each of these bottles into a little brass mortar and solemnly pounded them together. Out of a piece of old newspaper he constructed a funnel, introducing the point into the hole he had made in the top of the kerosene tin. To my horror, I saw the frightful contents of the mortar disappearing down the funnel and shoved well into the tin with a small piece of stick. Ban grinned at me. I was divided in my mind as to whether I had employed a wholesale murderer, but so

far he had killed nobody, and although I had not yet been out a week, I hoped for the best and took a bet on the glint of his eye.

"You'll excuse me, sir, for mentioning it, but these people have strong, tough stomachs! Pure rum won't do nothing to them. So I was just adding a few little things I know of that will put a little life into it."

Well! I have always been interested in strange causes and strange effects to be found in the Bush. Still, should I allow this devilish brew infusing to be administered? I ventured to take a sniff. With disastrous results. Most moving. Thinking it over, I dined. I ambled round town. I goggle-eyed, as politely as I could. Mostly niggers, sitting chin-to-knee on low stools munching cassava bread, who goggle-eyed at me in turn. No preparation for any dance so far as I could see. I thought perhaps Ban might have thought better of it. Anyway I had that sad sense of being in pawn. I had to acknowledge that he usually knew what he was about. I asked no questions. I returned to my hut. My bed was being prepared and looked very tempting. I got in.

Next, piercing shrieks! Crashing of many tin cans. Staccato throbbing of fat tom-toms.

I oozed out from under the unnecessary mosquito-bar scarcely realizing I had been asleep. If the massacre had started I felt it would be more dignified not to allow myself to be squashed to death, on the Roman gladiator principle, under a net. Scotchly, I endangered my nose round the corner of my doorway to see from which direction death was approaching.

A yellow, placid moon shone brightly just through the tops of the palm-trees, lighting up the whole town as well as its inhabitants in their best undressed styles. The center of attraction was Ban. Solemnly and impressively he was ladling out the venomous snake-bite dose. One small soup ladleful poured into a calabash was the prescribed tot. The result was powerfully impressive, the patient leaping in the air, mouth and eyes indescribably wide open. But none as yet seemed to be dying, although a white man must have suffered instantaneous collapse. In fact there was sufficient evidence that every one who had had his ration was thoroughly alive and sufficiently well pleased.

I quietly ensconced myself in deep shadow beneath a palm to watch. In the public "square" a circular space was cleared. Daz-

zling moonlight shone uninterrupted by shadows on the white sand. Superfluous babies and miscellaneous dogs were dumped into the background. The ancients of the tribe formed a fringe around the edge of the space, some sitting, some reclining, some erect. The old Captain, still gasping from his kingly portion of enlivened rum, sat on a stool a little apart from the others. The tom-tom orchestra was behind him. Tin cans, like babies and dogs, now went into the discard.

Ban stopped ladling long enough to say to me that some secret ceremony was being performed in the house of the obeah man, or witch-doctor, and indicated its direction. Presently up from the shadow of that hut all the town Beau Brummels advanced in the shimmering light, beautiful muscles rippling under the seemingly tight-drawn skins of their oiled and gleaming-bronze bodies.

The old Chief heard them coming and at his signal the tom-tommers started with a continuous muffled rumble. The dance was on. Now a Djoeka's foot is the last thing which disintegrates after he dies. His soles seem like an impossibility—plastic iron—and like his soul, indestructible. In his dancing his first purpose is

A Bush nigger cathedral or worship place. The upright bottles contain strange evil-spirit-repelling decoctions.

himself to make rhythmic sound. So they came now, shuffling iron-shod feet in unison through the sand. Two together, about twenty of them. In the circle they formed they faced each other, their bodies not quite touching.

Then the pace of the tom-toms changed and the main figure which this tribe use began, three semi-hops forward, then a leap in the air, knees up. As the body came down each leg was slapped smartly. The air resounded with perfectly simultaneous staccato cracks. And last of all, the height of good form, came a deep Zulu-ish grunt, the sound propelled from the "lower chest" or abdomen. With variations, this repeated again and again while the elders chanted. I was commenting to myself on the curious minor baboon-like intonation when Ban crept around to me to explain that it was a roundelay in my honor.

"We are glad the white man has come—he feeds us well with rum—we are glad——" and the dancers took it up, but in a high falsetto, so that the two parts made a weird sound effect. Such zest went into their performance that couples dropped out, exhausted. Another round of enlivener was necessary and the pulse of the tom-toms grew faint. Paddle songs, primitive

chanties, and others dealing with snakes, with food, drink, money, usually well-worn melodies frequently slightly varied in attack or by a new note or two, replaced "my" song. The dance repeated and threatened to stretch out incredibly without new incident. I went back to my hut before the inevitable stupor or worse should come, thinking on the curious fool's wisdom of oblivion.

Daylight found me coffeeful, dressed and fussy. There was absolutely nothing for me to do, Ban having packed everything used for the night's lodging. I declined the honor of leading the procession but watched the loads distributed on the heads of the various *drogas*. All carriers in this country are called drogas—droga ants and droga humans. The pride of a microscopic ten-year-old youngster when a galvanized bucket—in their eyes priceless—was balanced on his head! I had—not counting the babies at knee who tried to go along—about fifty carriers. The day's march was supposed to be about six good stiff hours' walk from the railway and fifty pounds would have been plenty for my unaccustomed head, but several ambitious society ladies swung along freely carrying with ease three loads, representing

three dollars. I winced a little over still others in this human pack-train, finely proportioned women who, with bare babies buttoned to their backs by the aid of a mere buttonhole of striped calico—baby legs like fat clothes-pins projecting over each hip—were topped off by three kerosene tins full of rice.

The last load passed from sight. I supposed I would soon overhaul them, although, as it proved, not a sound nor person did I meet the livelong day. But for the time I stopped being a business man and became my favorite self, a primitive human being, fat contentment in my heart and with eyes keen to see. Was I not going into the deep Bush with a perfectly good bread-and-butter-gaining intention, to say nothing of the glorious certainty of having my Bush-knowledge enlarged in a world where enchantment occurs?

I passed the fields of cassava which surround all Bush niggers' "countries" or villages, and waded an amber creek. I skirted a thorn-palm swamp which looked as an inhabitant of the northern hemisphere expects a jungle to look, and, as the trail turned at right angles, found myself on the high bank of a creek over which incalculable years ago a high tree once fell

down and formed a bridge. It was nature's joke to put that tree there, for it was in the right position exactly, not too far up nor down, but just at the end of the stream. It was a leviathan, not very old, I suppose, being a tree of indestructible heart, only a few hundred years. But there it lay in exactly the right place until the foot of man wandering that way was tempted. He, the man, thought himself very clever, doubtless, when he used his silly knife to cut out a path across. The wood spirits must have laughed! But they were gracious, for, there being plenty of room, they had cultivated a marvelous hanging garden of hothouse exotics through whose foliage one saw beautifully framed bits of the brown water eddying beneath.

Of course, it is a frightful confession for a man six feet three-and-a-bit to make, but I could not go on without beguiling myself at the expense of the ridiculous squeaky little bats hanging like dead leaves to its under-side. Prostrate, I reached under that fat tree's stomach at great pains and scraped off—wickedly detached—rows and rows of bats!

Finally, before I left that spot I laid a bet with a certain plant—not an extraordinary

plant—only a Bush-pineapple of sorts. It was quite in the way. Some one ought long ago to have trod on it. I wagered that somebody would. Only enchantment could so far have saved it. I feel that Bush things, like mortals, receive that mysterious protection which seems to partake of the supernatural, which, at any rate, is one of the somehow finely tangible demonstrations of the Glory which is called God Almighty, only so long as they live, each in his own way, to the Law. Some day, I thought sadly, that little tree pine would fail so to live. Then it would die, and its most likely end would be to perish under foot. It obviously and trustingly took the negative. I wagged my head and went on, making a resolution that whenever I went across that log I would be very fair and go around it.

I became a mining engineer again, just as though I had presently to report to fuzz-buzz directors, and traveled up the trail in a very business-like way, putting aside my light mood. Now I knew that on this freshly acquired gold concession I was prospecting were three tame mountain ranges. Not being greedy but at the same time liking a lot, I thought I would start off looking over about fifty thousand acres.

Remembering this, I exploded in showers of
ɛclamation points at my scandalous plouter-
ıg. So I became violently walkative and be-
an to crane my neck through the few and nar-
ɔw tree-top and creek-bed windows which one
nds in this Bush for a sight of the mountains.
'othing to be seen and no Child's-Guide-to-
nowledge called Ban to answer questions!
ɪrippy hot and getting hungry I followed the
'ail over bumps in the tree-scape. And then,
'ithout a moment's warning and out of im-
enetrable Bush, I emerged, stubbing my toe on
ıe foot of a red iron-stone mountain. I wished
hadn't water-logged myself at the last creek!
ut trying my best to remember that I was a
Iighlander, I painfully and puffily crawled up
ıe steepest trail in the world. Why were there
ot bits of fallen-down babies bestrewing this
'ail? Discarded chunks of chewed sugar-cane
'om Ban especially inspired confidence in my six-
ɛet-three-and-a-bit two-hundred pound carcass.
I was so hot by then that nothing mattered,
ut at last I drippingly reached the top. Hav-
ıg been told that there was a beautiful camp
ite with good water at the foot of the highest
ill this trail crossed, and being perfectly con-
dent that this was one of the highest hills in

the world—though my aneroid lied and made it out to be only 800 feet—with assurance I engineered myself downhill, daydreaming coffee and clean clothes.

There was plenty of water and lots of room but neither a human nor a sign of camp in sight. Having been on the trail for four hours, I felt cheated. My appetite assured me camp must be just here or hereabouts, not more than fifteen minutes' distance anyway! Anticipating coffee, I saw evidence on the other side of a small creek that my drogas had "outspanned" or rested—bits of cassava bread left behind. As I went on, I met a crotched stick in the middle of the trail. A bit of paper was impaled on the fork. It must be for me.

"My compliments, sir, and this is half-way.
Your respectful servant,
BAN."

If this was only half-way the Pacific Ocean must be the limit of my concession. Later on, from this point to the railroad it used to take me one hour and thirty-five minutes. My Bush-interested eyes had delayed me desperately but now my Mining-Engineer personality, moved to violence, objectionably hustled the pleasanter

Me frantically past most beguiling trees, flowers, birds and beasts, through a realm where color reigned, over two more tame mountain ranges—and, thank heavens! got drowned passing over the last of the six swim-worthy creeks I had crossed that day. In my real self I emerged to the glories of a particularly well God-painted sunset.

In the foreground just beyond seethed masses of jabbering humanity! It seemed like a riot, but was only ration distribution to Djoekas. Commander-in-Chief Ban appeared beside me with his cutlass-sword in one hand and the coffee pot in the other. By some miracle my comfortable Bush bungalow had already gone up. An eighteen by twelve tarpaulin, a hammock conveniently slung, a table, a chair, a mat, and a kitchen fire in one corner furnished my home. I interestedly watched the Djoekas make their beds for the night.

They brought bundles of palm-leaves. Half were laid on the ground, the lower stratum of a sandwich. The others were loosely thrown or plaited upon a few sticks for the top layer. The meat sandwich was complete when they had tucked themselves between! They made no other preparation against night or weather.

Sleep seized us all. Ban was baiting me with coffee in the bright dawn before I really realized I had got home to my own territory.

At noon that day we came to a large creek which I knew was well within my land, the first recognizable landmark from the railway. Loads were stacked, temporary camps erected, and by sunset I was master of Capsicum Camp. From here we would start prospecting and, if we were fortunate enough to find payable gold, could erect permanent camps in the vicinage of the discoveries.

Daylight next morning found me counting out money to the clamoring horde of Bush niggers. They began to haggle before they even saw coin. Ban warned me that each was already concocting a story of how frightfully he had been underpaid. To save complications, a Bush bankteller's counter was evolved out of two forked sticks and a pole. The latter was laid in the two crotches. To get his or her money each man or woman had to pass underneath and remain on the other side. I paid them all precisely what was due them, what they had agreed to work for. Not one was contented! They all remonstrated violently. They made a very disagreeable, peevish noise. Their

getting-hotter bodies upset the atmosphere, with me in it. I decided to act. Ban was a positive wonder on the superstitions of these people and I took his advice on what to do now. I called for the camera, quickly adjusted it on its tripod beside me and opened it.

I exposed its single wild eye on the deadly solitude of the Bush. In a twinkling all that remained to mark the scene were a few discarded fat, squashy babies sproddling around. The riot was quelled! I could not make out what Mr. and Mrs. Bush Nigger have against the camera. They won't run from a gun or a cutlass but seem at once disconcerted by the glass eye, awful though small, peering out of the blackness. They quite likely believe it to be the eye of the In-the-Box-Gaddo of the white man.

Ban, father of thirteen, was elected to collect the babies. Up the trail a little way, on wild plantain leaves my men cut, we composed a baby pie. Two cupfuls of sugar, applied more or less broadcast, muffled the vocal escape, but I was considerably relieved, looking that way sometime later, to see the pie was empty. I never saw any of them until I went to Niewtown. They faded into the greenwood.

III

PROSPECTING

WE used the day to erect Tarpaulin Town. Sundown found every person cooking vigorously under his open-sided canvas roof, preparing supper, daylight breakfast and a distantly-to-be-partaken-of-lunch, three in one. Then the Mining Committee went into session, Ban on the "grub," myself as general adviser, and Dick as hunch expert. Dick was my foreman prospector and hunter, a fine mountain of black and gentlemanly manliness, who called himself an Englishman—*from British Guiana!* Dick was born black, but he has a lot of fine qualities and a way of washing pans of gravel out of creeks which shows the true value the creeks carry. I personally am just as likely as not to get either a pan that shows enough gold to make me ashamed to think I ever had a creditor, when the surroundings are really a blank, or to wash a pan in a perfectly good creek that shows me nothing whatever when, upon reprospecting, it

proves to be a good sound money-maker. So Dick was an invaluable co-worker.

We decided to head off south-westish with a few men to see why gold should not be found on or around mountains which I would much rather have believed had been put there for the sole purpose of spreading sunsets upon. We chose to accompany us Frederick "Smith" (having shaved too deeply into a rival's throat, he elected to be called Smith—the French are slightly hasty?) and "Little" six-foot-six-inches Christie, both from Martinique, clever, cheerful work-machines during hours. After that, they are cup-loving, belligerent, song-ful bandits, but with big hearts and lots of pluck, just what one wants when things go wrong in the Gold Bush. Besides these, there were two other wonder-workers, Boston and Gamble. Two finer primitive gold-getters could not be found, Ban told me. "Clean and knowl-edgeable workers" he called them. Sharp tools, well-mounted, short cuts to results, was their motto. Ban declared that these "big" men could not be surpassed in all the three Guianas. The rest, Calico, Jeans, Jumbo and Tom, were untried quantities. Only one of them, Tom, a stupid-looking old negro, did not appeal to me.

people would call the sensible reason for my taking to the Bush to stay for a bit and mine myself instead of merely looking about and making a report for some one else. The formations are so fascinatingly complex that an expert on metals and rocks with world-wide comparisons at his disposal has about as much chance of predicting accurately as a drunken man at a race meeting to pick winners. The sober side of me knew this, even while the lure of adventure enticed, and a hunch about Garlic Jones persuaded. But my love of Bush flowers and creatures in itself afforded plentiful reason for prolonged survey. Of course, above all, the witchery of the primitive, the enchantment of the spirit which seems to occur in the open, that super-material God-realization so exquisitely accessible beyond the bounds of man-meddled matters, persistently attracted me.

The top layer of my conscious mind dealt with the practical problem of finding gold. I was of course seeking the "quartz creeks" of which I had heard much from balata collectors passing this way. Quartz creeks in this country mean streams in which the major quantity of gravel is composed of quartz rock at some

time and place seen to carry gold. Vague to the uninitiated, it is all the ordinary placer miner usually has to start on in Dutch Guiana. I hoped Dick's method would not be necessary. He advised: "The way to do in Surinam is, if you see enough gold to pay for the day's rice and a little bit of tobacco, take it out and don't bother about tomorrow. If there's no more tomorrow, tighten your belt and shift."

But the classifying layer of me never forgot that there is no human being today who can explain the savannas of Surinam, those savannas on whose rims I was working. Parts of them are not unlike the Grand Canyon in miniature. Instead of castellated lime or sandstone rocks with big bits balanced precariously on top, on flat stretches of quartz savanna one finds little pebbles balanced atop mud pies. How the rock became broken? The fractured quartz-bed deposits in Surinam and their causation are enough to puzzle the most supernatural of geologists. Their *raison d'être* has been the cause of many works by persons who seem sure they know all about it, but none agree and none are consistent. Surinam conglomerates offer a bone of contention over which scientists are likely to growl till the end of time. Unluckily none of

us was there when it was formed. In this instance deduction is peculiarly uncertain and sometimes very expensive. At sixteen hundred feet above sea level one may uncover two feet of river-bed gravel with an overlay of nineteen feet of decomposed volcanic matter and that river-bed gravel carrying enormous values in alluvial gold. Sea level pushed up in the sky. Highly interesting to find, those sections of coarse, nuggety gold. A fascinating gamble, this land, to the scientist, the actual miner or the searcher for essential if much less considered treasure.

The morning was brass-skyed; it was the end of the dry season. Equatorial rain plays double part of favor and curse of Providence to the gold-maker. He must have water to sluice with, to free gold from gravel and sand. For months a torrent, the dependence of the placer miner, descends at more or less regular hours each day. Too much rain endangers the work, threatening the dams. As with all things, of course continence is not always granted. Too little rainfall means tedious delay. Now there was none. Still, it would rain in time. I had much to do even after I had located my work places, clearing ground, cutting trails and so on. When rain

arrived, in a mere whisk I would be a real live gold mine!

So we dived into the deep cool Bush out of the glare of our camp ground. It is a marvel to think that the Bush can remain always so moist-aired as this does. It seems impossible to imagine being thirsty in. But one can. I had occasion to remember it afresh.

One goes out on these vague prospecting trips with but a hazy notion as to where one is going or when one will come back. The great thing to take is enough powder and shot or loaded shells, tarpaulin and a few medicines. This time, as we could scarcely hope to find enough water to drink, we took some. A good thing, too, as it turned out. The first day's walk took us right to the foot of the hills we were aiming for. There we should have found water but not a drop was to be had; still, as we were all gold-diggers in disposition, and gold-diggers is only an involved polite way of saying optimists, we boiled our "Billies," or coffee-pails, ate our soup—some of us suspirationfully!—and felt sure that tomorrow we would be able even to wash a little.

Up and up those steep, leaf-slippery hills we toiled next day. After going over bench after

bench toward an almost unattainable top, we eventually reached a desired point from which I could see the general contour of the range and determine the deepest ravine, where water would most likely be found. I perceived it some miles to the west, and by the time we were again under way the sun was perhaps three hours from sunset level. So it was a case of hurry, and haste in a tropical Bush with good heavy packs and a frightful, increasing thirst is not generally wise.

My men were made right and did not fuss. They just kept right on, going faster all the time. At last we reached the edge of the ravine, to find it desperately deep and particularly rocky. So steep in fact that only the freshest and fattest of us took off our packs and started to go down, holding on as well as we could with our hands to the sometimes useful although occasionally accursed rope-vines which look so wonderfully ornamental in tropical photographs!

I saw Dick look round as though about to warn me, but he had all he could do to maintain his own equilibrium. I came to another steep bit. To save my knees I ran down. I grabbed at a pendent green thing to steady

while. Up where we were it was dry and pure rock.

I went back for the rest of the men. I left my companions down below to cut open a trail down the bed of the creek to save time while I returned to the others. Above, I hated to tell my poor fellows, "Nothing doing in the water line, boys."

They looked serious for a moment, but a move had to be made and they were game. Doubling up the packs, we slid down the ravine side as best we could. I was surprised that my neck at least was not broken when I reached the bottom. The most slippery thing in all the world to walk on is dry leaves; add an abrupt angle, with here and there the surface roots of trees exposed, and you have our precarious picture. But one goes swiftly at least. In half an hour we had overhauled the men, who had opened the creek-bed trail. Redistributing the loads, we pushed on. Depressions in the rocky bottom which had filled up with sand were tried out for water. The common recipe for this act in Surinam is to cut a long pole and ram it down in the sand until bed-rock is reached. Upon pulling up the stick, it is easy to tell whether there is water within four or

five feet of the surface. The continual verdict here was, "Damp, but with no appreciable quantity of water."

Our packs hindering us, we cached them up among the branches of a conveniently situated tree, going forward with the small quantity of emergency rations which could be contained in a small cooking pot. Traveling light like this we made good time, and judging by the flattening of the ground ahead it was easy to see that we were nearing the foot of the main range. Below I was positive we must find water. Dick, who knew the Gold Bush well by hearsay, said that one certain creek down there was proverbially cool and water-containing.

We reached it at last. It was *dry*.

That was one of the times when I said very forcibly, "Tut," etc., etc. There is almost nothing in physical human experience more tragic than the disappointment of a commanding thirst. I looked about. I saw a tree which for some reason I could not fathom held my eye.

When you were a nice little girl and wore a pigtail, or a nice little boy with carefully "slicked" hair, and read story-books of wild and woolly doings in the tropical jungle, did you ever absorb the tale of the Traveler's Palm?

Well, if you did not, you should have done so! One never knows what one is going to profit by. I, being a well-ordered small boy, did read all about it, and being luckily credulous, did not forget it. Here was my romantic Traveler's Palm! I made haste to cut a hole at the base of the leaves where the rain had collected, leaves so thick that the sun could not reach and evaporate all the water, and carefully drew it off, delicious, clear, cool, in my little lard tin Billy. Very tidy as an end to the day to sit down near the friendly fan of the tree of benefaction—nature's own Thermos bottle—and watch the tea water boil! Fountain-tree Camp, I gratefully named it.

After a good night's rest, albeit on the ground, we went back up the creek-bed for the loads. We were getting acquainted with the general lay of the land and with a little bit of luck we might meet some work places soon. Bringing the stuff down to our sleeping place of the night before proved, however, so exhausting that I personally was inclined to make the rest of the day Sunday. After all, we were in a tropical climate. I even gave the order to sling our hammocks. I did not look at Dick. I felt that Dick looked guardedly at me. We all

even got into our hammocks
pipes. Nothing was said—but
in the middle of a working we
rolled out again.

"It's no good, Dick. I can't res
mind feels too hollow."

"Quite right, sir. Not being
rather keep on looking for troub
it come and catch me."

Be-compassed, be-mining-too
gunned again five minutes later,
out of sight of Fountain-tree Ca
a tree trunk here and there, doing
opening as possible, we prod
hunchfully onward. The Bush
Sunday-morn-i-fied. Real bad dr
ness. But we went on. An hour
formed a war dance by reason of
tracks.

A tapir is a big animal. We a
must be pretty near at least a
pool of water, as he spends a lo
time taking baths. He is lazy
and dislikes walking intensely.
tracks being visible we decided
he was on one of his natural
not been hunted into a stran

fashion, we took his trail, following it with difficulty. It was two hours before we discovered his bathroom, a long pool between high banks. From a fish-ology standpoint, with sidelights on snakes, frogs, water lizards, etc., alive and dead, this pool was a remarkably comprehensive exhibit. The pungency of the place was—well, unique. But that didn't matter. We had water, not to drink, but to wash any extra interesting pans or battels of possibly-gold-containing-creek-paving in, thanks to a convenient reef of rock which had formed a natural dam across a creek. In the dry season the pool had no drainage—the tapir had a rock stopper in his bathtub.

Following the odd outcroppings of this natural dam, Dick and I, working feverishly, sunk a post hole down eight feet, a good hundred yards away. At the same level as the tapir's bath we reached good water filtered through a hundred yards of sand and gravel. Soon we had a fine well working and, this completed, we hastened back at dusk to Fountain-tree-ville. Next morning we established camp near the well. Then we started off prospecting in earnest.

Following down Tapir-bath creek, in which

Washing gold. The "battel," or southern gold-washing pan, instrument of varied adventure.

up to then we had found no signs of gold, we came upon a dry rock tributary. This looked just about right to us all and we proceeded thoroughly to prospect it. Splendid quartz gravel resting on white clay was the general formation and it seemed so promising that we decided to transport a fair-sized sample of the dirt to the water hole, which unfortunately was over a mile away. On washing this sample we found very passable values, so we spent a few days doing more extensive prospecting work and the preliminaries to enable us to start as soon as rain should come. Later pannings and prospection as well as the location of the creek showed, upon mature consideration, that it did not come up to workable standard. Something having to be done at once, since I had by no means unlimited funds, I made up my mind that this place at least for the present was too speculative and that I must find out where the water and values were more dependable. Gold there was, but not enough.

So we turned back to Capsicum. Frederick repeated the old saying of the country, "Gold is where you will find it." But he added with maddening suggestiveness, "Don't let your luck lead you past."

Now it chances I am rather long on freak deposits. I am not bad on finding gold where it cannot exist! And as he told me this I was looking at a gigantic tree uprooted just down below the rim of a flat hilltop. A bunch of moss and grass apparently interwoven among the upturned roots spurred my bird-nesting instinct. It warred with gold interest. I was nettled. Just for spite I went to see if that bird's nest had anything to show me.

With my weather eye open for the possible snake, these upside-down tree roots being rather popular snake rooming houses, I arrived topside. I inspected the nest, found the family had left, perhaps for roomier quarters, but was peculiarly rewarded for my exertions. I discovered a nice collection of mud castles, each roof of which was composed of a little mineral specimen. Bossing the job was a pleasing piece of pink quartz inlaid with sun-reflecting gold, tie-pin size. Into my cigarette box, by and by to a jeweler's and now it lives dryly and comfortably in the pin cushion! But then, being Scotch, I argued that a small piece of gold logically should be associated with other pieces of gold round or thereabouts. Violent prospection. Great anticipations. Fu-

tile results. "The gold is where it is. When you see it take it. Whys and wherefores——"

Painfully authentic experience! I, on my own fat back, packed dirt down to the water to pan, too. But I do own an exceptional tie-pin. Everybody wants it and nobody shall have it. It's a contrary country anyhow.

The trail had been ungenerous. Not here had Garlic Jones, the piratical, left the source of another fortune! Certainly not here the place to search for miracles. But I had not lost by the trip. My men had been tried out and found to have "big hearts in the right time and place." This is as important, quite, as big gold values.

When we got in, Ban inquired, "Chief, did you sleep soft?"

"I just took it as it came, Ban. It wasn't so bad."

"Well, Chief, I smoked an extra pipe for you and put an extra blanket on top of me by way of bringing you luck." No fuss about my being gone, but a memory for my discomforts—a friend indeed.

IV

MY KINGDOM

THE Equator's treasure chest is most engaging. It has the look of being locked with a very common type of key. Newcomers are wont to feel that a miracle may occur almost unasked: even the old miner is not proof against leaving his conservatism so detached that it may be easily purloined by the imps of chance and luck. Although my survey had been somewhat futile, the mere sight of gold in nearly-good quantity made me feel that I was on the highroad to finds as marvelous as had ever been discovered. So I left camp again, aiming toward higher mountains where still-running streams must have their source. There I could expect to find water.

This time I discovered very promising and to me quite unknown country. It lay not far, as far goes in that country, from the railroad; low hills, good quartz with gold in places and some water where I was inclined to think I could even now install one or two bread-and-

butter-making gangs of men. After a comparatively brief prospection I had such encouraging looking returns that I went immediately eight hours on foot to the railway, and proceeded directly to Paramaribo by the pay-train to find out from the Government map where I had been. I feared the grant might be off my land and belong to some one.

I found it lay in three main tracts. One great one I leased from the Government. The gold rights to the second I took over from its present holders. The ownership of the third, although it stood in the name of D. J. Granville, seemed somewhat obscure. By strong intuition I felt that I must have that piece at any effort. Through an agent I set the wheels in motion to discover where and who D. J. Granville might be. By law in Dutch Guiana he must be a citizen to hold land, but he was not known in the place. Leaving an order to make him, when found, a fair offer on the property I returned to the Bush.

To find oneself in control of about fifteen thousand acres is to feel an almost oppressively opulent land-baron, no matter how flat the pocketbook. I had seen that the gold lay in belts or patches on this tract, in formations

similar to those from which such great gold strikes as Garlic Jones' had been made. My land included his known and seemingly worked-out property. I had a look at it, and at the grim wreck of his house, a skeleton, which somehow had the appearance of hanging grotesquely in the forest near by. There was no note of cheer in the place, and the exhaustion of the obvious diggings was palpable. But my conviction that there was another somewhere was peculiarly persistent. I never went out without searching the ground over for some signs of a working which was not known. Also I wanted to decide from the indications which direction the gold seemed to come from or go toward, so that by carefully following I might reach the mother lode, the main reef, or perchance a second rich pocket. I fear I did not approach my task modestly as well becomes a real miner when he has removed expert's clothes, but with the air of one somewhat confident of victory already. However, I settled in earnest at the beginning of that pseudo-wet season to make Dutch Guiana prove its merit, and in more than one sort of treasure of the primitive.

At the railway station nearest these three

tracks was a very good house about ten feet off the ground with six big water tanks and lots of other fussy luxuries, screened against all bitey things, so I could prance about with no fear of being gnawed by wild beasts of any kind. Since it could be had for $8.00 a month —cheap!—I took it. I named it Anticipation in recognition of my happy state of feeling. A camp for my workmen was so near that I could keep them right under my eye. While it was being made clean I struck out prospecting again in the friendly Bush, perfectly satisfied. Three probable sluice-line locations, one showing excellent gold, were the result. I had most cheerfully set my black Dutch lumps of wood sawyers under my excellent boys to get out timber for sluice boxes from the top of those obstinate hills. That day week I meant to be producing. Although I suspected two of the boys of being almost handicaps instead of helpers—an attitude in which Ban confirmed me—I calculated I had reason to expect an average of one hundred and fifty grams, five ounces a day; my expenses were considerably less. I was full of hope if it would only rain.

I could live like a king in my castle for a hundred dollars a month with Ban and another

man to look after me. The country would not fail to yield me that, I thought, so I was pleased. Even without Garlic Jones' magnificent luck there seemed only the most cheering prospect of a jolly good living, and the possibility of getting enough ahead so that if I chose I could take time to play a little. The other bit of me, the bit that never had a chance to develop, loves pretty things. I had them, too, between times, when I was, so to speak, formally "in residence." My house was nicely and "tamely" painted. Very. Ban and I made it home, sending to town for what I wanted. I "blowed" myself to lovely hand-painted Javanese sarongs, which I hung like tapestries, and took the corners off with the aid of palms and flowers in also lovely hollowed-out sections of palm-trees. My gallery or veranda was usually a mass of big flower pots; hanging baskets were made of rough sticks. Pink lotus lilies lived in five half barrels. I had fresh ones as often as I wanted them from a swamp not far away where some straying mortal must have dropped the seed. They were exquisitely lovely by candlelight and in the rooms where "I" live, in my real house, I would have no other light near me. An oil

lamp with its raw shininess disturbs my imagination. When I had to have lanterns they wore orange crêpe hoopskirts or petticoats.

My beds were later the pet jokes of my friends. One old mahogany one I found down here I fitted out with an American mattress and Liberty (Lon'non) chintz trimmings, all dull gold and purple wiggles. Very pleasing. Then I had the loveliest palm-fiber hammock from the Rio Negro Indians. It took two years to get delivery of it but when it came it was a joy forever, just like a bit of fine lace. Once I picked up from a rich coolie a sandalwood bed frame and I had a Spaniard weave a dull brown rawhide center to it. Very soft and comfy. Beside these three, on an orchid-fringed balcony just outside my door, I had a long and broad canvas stretcher-bed affair, piled all over with pillows; and it was there that I usually started the night. I often gave each of the beds a turn. The view from each was different and I never did decide which was best. The room was very large and high, so did not look jumbled up, and had a veranda north and south. For chairs I had a collection of Bush nigger carved stools, just the thing for a bedroom, as then one is always

near the level of one's feet, on account of their being low, and so can avoid the bother of finding foot-resting chairs. My floor, the same in all rooms, was a lovely local wood called brownhart, brown with the loveliest grains. I kept it looking very nice, highly polished with turpentine and beeswax.

Thus I, who am two different people, existed. When my mining clothes, all muddy, came off, I got clean, very clean, then came downstairs leaving me, the miner, at the door, while I, the self-indulging person, arrived in rooms that were quite passable for the time, place, and state of the exchequer. It was one of the ways to keep the whole of me alive, positive; for when one is much alone one side of one's personality is like to overmaster or negatively becloud the others. The esthetic side of one need not in the least contradict a passion for the elemental. To leave the train, to enter the deep Bush through a tunnel of palms, to see green and more green trees, to hear nothing like the voices of ugly and dirty people, to get to my camp, to undress, to walk just so to my favorite pool in the lovely clear and clean creek, to sit in the water up to my neck and watch baby fish try to find bits of my

toes that might be edible—that to me is satisfying. Those are real things, primitive, for which I, when be-collared, get desperate and wild.

Supposed to be the end of a long drought, the ridiculous season would not change from dry to wet exactly as it should. It was trying to have to wait for rain when one had good working places prospected and had proven gold to be there in payable quantities. I wished some one had thought to try that exasperation on old Job! A fine outlook so far as profitable gold-containing work places went didn't help me much when none of these places were near running or in fact even drinking water, when I had a lot of men to feed and pay, and when the state of the treasury was daily growing more serious. Still the climate was so wonderful that it discounted even the Dutch! The only time when I can truly dislike this Colony is now and then when we have too little or too much rain. This was one of the now times. Dead dry weather for four months and the rainy season a month overdue sent me every day to bed with a crick in my neck from looking up at the sky to see if there were not some wet-looking clouds sailing round.

and Dick were fine. They always saw
ming "soon-soon!" when I was nearly
air. A lie told at the right time and
right way is a wild comfort at times,
n sure that it earns no blistered tongue.
for a productive period I took my "one
o little, three little" black boys off to
was-once swamp to prospect, a bad
ng to deal with the evil-smelling,
y mud. We did it quite thoroughly
ome coarse gold but not enough to
. Trying various places, I kept the
being a total loss, but it was hard

myself, I set about discovering my
found I had some not very nasty
not over two hours' walk away.
irection lived a "pork-knocker."
vho work on shares with the con-
or pork-knockers, have been the
big gold lodes becoming known.
l of "tributers," as they are also
faint fancy that I had met this
en long ago somewhere in the
e was strikingly hawk-nosed,
ed gray hair, a bloodless, sal-
luster, neutral eye and a bad

scar. I did not like him and h
very nice. Had fat ankles, wh
depressing when in sight? Or
people in the Bush are as dull
bers on ocean bottom. They t
-so very seriously. They play c
too late. They take honest
trivially, blind to the amazing
make the primitive worth while.

Mr. DeBrinnie had something
Bush pirate. A Bush pirate ma
decent fellow. To qualify he
enough pluck—enough "clock-w
into the Bush on a shoestring a
quires it, to acquire what he n
without too scrupulous observ
"Meum and Tuum." To thriv
exist, he must at least be a real
people in towns make a "succ
initiative. Like bad cooks, the
receipt books exactly. The form
life is always at hand in the
Conventions. But if they were sha
support and stay? Not many co
meanly, when, upon their unber
food and shelter must someh
from the raw earth. Bush bri

they transgress town laws, are interesting because of their strength, against which their own rough Bush law raises unmitigable penalties.

I had known Bush pirates of several varieties, but to whatever—often goodly—lengths they have been willing to go to gain what they desired, they always had been lavish in their humanity. One lived on straight rice without butter, sugar, or milk, for two months, in order disinterestedly to support two motherless sisters in town. One girl had tuberculosis, and she had to have raw eggs. No one knew that this man saved her at the personal expense of doing without everything but rice, which he cooked at night for the three following meals. And he did it with a twinkle in his eye. A genuine white man!

DeBrinnie was not that sort. He was crafty, and a grump to his dull wife. Neither of them was well kept. I suspected in my heart that she was worse than he was. Still, I am sorry for all begrumped women. But DeBrinnie was a person of moment to me, first because he seemed to know a great deal about my affairs, more than my residence in the neighborhood would warrant.

"You're not new to the game, of course," he assured me. "With good experience in gold mining perhaps you can do what most people can't."

"You seem to be conversant with my past," I remarked with a smile.

"Oh, one hears things," he returned vaguely. "I suppose you are satisfied with the land you got?"

"Rather well. By the way do you know anything about D. J. Granville?"

"A whole lot," he said quickly. "He lives in Trinidad. Was a miner here once." His manner suddenly took on an unpleasant sneer. "You won't get that land you want, I'm afraid. I have just leased it myself on royalty."

I could not imagine how he knew I wanted that land. It required my "round-the-world" demeanor, as my friends banteringly called the *nth* degree of my suavity, to get out of the place without asking him what he meant by his manner. I was deeply disappointed about the property, annoyed at him.

But nothing worries the Real Me. On my travels toward home, I was won back to good nature. I had to cross a big dam wall behind

; a big pond like my tapir's bathroom.
e to stop; loving water, I had Ban make
-leaf shelter on top of the wall. It was
:y looking up the valley with about
water contained between the hills. I
in comfort to see what was worth
ɜrving; there is always something. I
ɔd look around and spotted an animal
:. It dived and came up nearer. Then
beautifully—a mother otter of the
ıth American variety with three ba-
ɔse youngsters were the fattest, fluf-
most playful people that ever hap-
ong ago a tree had fallen into the
d gone half under water. This was
ard and general playhouse for them.
swam ploppily about on the lookout
l any trouble and the babies made me
th their games. My pet one was to
dive and come up near their mother
o get her to allow them to ride on
Then they mobbed her and made
so as to be ready for supper. She
e log. They all pursued satisfaction.
then one fell in the water and it was
:o see the hurry the little fat person
ɔ return to the feast and not lose

precious time. I left them at
one has the right kind of mind
self in the Bush at times like
Collector of personalities t
den lives of the Savanna In
a magnet. I found that I
own land. Five nations
which I saw. The others
was immensely attracted
of this fine people. The
away-into-the-Bush slaves
groes. The Savanna Ind
dered down this way from
Andes, and, whether by
merely greater seclusion,
tion over the coastal Ca
So I prepared to mak
about two hundred words
took Woonta, a half-Ind
with me in order both t
penetrable Bush enigmas a
my human prospecting. O
in this colony there are hu
with Bush patched on on
Yet an Indian is hardly ev
open. They never wear pa
if one wants to find their vi

and poke about until some overlooked clue turns up. They never take the same road twice. When they walk *en famille* each one chooses his own way and they keep well spread out. Of course this is only a sign of the past. But they are very fussy about taking one into their villages in the middle of one of those patches. It was only by force of some beguile on my part that I eventually gained my end. For a long time, although I could see numerous openings or beginnings of roads or paths, they all seemed to end in some thornbush or other. It defied me to think that a man like myself, something of a tracker, could not find the entrance to a village of five hundred people, but it was the case.

So with my splendid-looking hunting partner I went out often. My eyes are out of the ordinary good and well trained, but compared with him I am disgustingly blind. Woonta would arrive at dawn. To cross the savanna we were both quite dressed, he in loin cloth and I in vest, trousers and sand shoes with rubber soles. I never carried a gun when I went out with an Indian. I went to see him see things I was too blind and untrained to see. He only took a bow with a set of assorted

The Indian hunter of today

arrows, each one for a different animal. In about an hour, when the sun made daylight enough to see, we reached the thick, deep Bush. We slipped through a hunting trail well known to Woonta. As soon as we were clear of the thick razor grass and thornbush which grows always on the edge of the savannas, we began to prepare for hunting. First out of the arrow-sheath came a flask made from a small calabash. It had oil in it that smelled more of roast pork than anything else I can think of. This was rubbed all over his skin and my clothes, which fit tight enough so that all the man smell was killed about me.

This done, we were ready. He walked first. Now and then I made a twig snap. He stopped for a time or two. I was unlucky enough to go on making missteps. He gave me a pitying look over his shoulder. Still, I was pretty good at getting over the ground quietly and he did not have to fuss often. To see the way that man's eyes worked was simply too marvelous for words. He held up a finger. It was up to me to stand absolutely motionless. I stared where he was looking and saw nothing.

In a flash he was yards away, then stood stock still, then he was off again. So he went

on till he had reached a spot he wanted. Steadily and very slowly he raised his bow. When it was in a Y with his chest he selected an arrow without looking down,—always the one he needed. He swung the point up to his bow hand while holding the feathered end in the other. Then slowly higher went the bow, away back he pulled the cord until it looked as though it must break. Usually about at this point I saw what he was aiming at. Six times out of ten he hit the bird or beast.

It was a great treat watching him, all so naturally graceful. Sometimes exciting too. We treed a big jaguar. He could not resist the chance. He fired to get an arrow well home behind the brute's shoulder where his heart grows. Only this time the arrow point grazed the rib. It deflected and for a time things looked quite interesting. I luckily had my razor-edged cutlass with me or there would have been a nasty mess around that district. My future would have been spent with the rest of Mephistopheles' crew if I hadn't finished the beast by a lucky throw.

In many matters Woonta was indescribably Bush-wise. We came on some trees I had noticed often and asked about only to get as a

continuous reply "Hardwood"—so depressing! He revealed them to me as quinine trees. I saw the seeds too, just like stumpy cow's horn, yellow green. And it was deeply satisfactory to have him tell the different calls one heard, so gratifying that I was in danger of becoming forever Bush-mad. We came to a tree leaking resinous gum, much rubbed at the base by something. I asked. Wild pigs! The boars score the bark with tusks, the gum flows, they rub this on themselves because flies and ticks fly from it. Rather clever?

Just a few yards beyond this spot we found an ant-bear's bones mixed up with a jaguar's. They only go about at night and are very uncommon. They are frightened of nothing in the Bush, and they have such sharp claws to rip things open with that they simply loaf around looking for trouble. The jaguar had evidently had a bad time of it, as his rib bones were broken off short in several places, this though the ant-bear had a busted skull. One could almost see the fracas with the two beasts dying fighting. I had a great respect for them both.

When we were getting birds, which the Indians call to them with marvelous imitation,

Woonta made such funny faces that it took me all my time to keep from mirth; but to laugh at an Indian is unforgivable. The way he saw a track where no track was to be seen made my fairly accustomed eye appear purblind. I have again and again tried to make him and others in this tribe show me what they were following, but as soon as they stopped pointing out leaves with the dew spilt out of them and blades of grass which were bent over unnaturally I lost my place in the game right away. In the deep forest there are such hosts of leaves and such armies of blades that I do not blush for my inability to become altogether an adept at that sort of thing. But I ardently wish my mother had farmed me out to Indians when I was a puppy.

We hunted up to about nine in the morning. Then things are bad generally. Birds of most kinds are in the trees, eating and not roosting. Animals are lying down on the top of hillocks where they have arranged to see in all directions, so it is a long chance to think that one can get anything by hunting before late in the evening. If enough game had been killed to supply me and his family for a day or two we went home. If not we would try to sleep until

the sun was ready for bed
kinds were getting up to fee
usually found us back near
ment. I always learned a
ways that were to me very ı
but I saw I should have to
plomacy to get into the villa

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thought I found answer ade
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my quest had so broadene
could scarcely fail. Prospec

fying unless one is a bit of an explorer, a philosopher, a naturalist, a humanist—perhaps even a mystic. Old Garlic Jones had gold, gleaming, beautiful, damnable, useful, but just metal. I hunted for more than gold; for all of life which is transmutable into force to strengthen that real little bit of God inside every man who is alive. I knew that whether I returned to Paramaribo empty-handed or not I should at least be richer.

VI

MAKING TROPICAL GOLD

WITH comparative equanimity I passed through the interval which had begun as an ordeal of waiting for the tantalizing wet season which would not come. The sky merely dropped hints of coming favors, no use for creek-filling but reassuring us that there was water in reserve. Then one day looking back from my house at Anticipation toward the mountains I perceived fat black clouds. I saw approaching the end of optimistic dives into the Bush, pessimistic arrivals at dry, dry work places, and grouchy returns. Coming out near the edge of the savanna early in the afternoon, I met parasol ants carrying home leaves to their nest.

"Ban, I saw parasol ants droging," I remarked later.

"Fine, sir. Better be ready to start early tomorrow. These ants don't make fun like your 'glass.' When they work in daytime it is time

to get all tools sharp and in order: rain in twenty-four hours."

Like the pussywillows at home, or the crocuses which start everybody buying garden hoes and rakes—with which they perhaps go and break ground only to get violently frost-bitten—this sign moves the Bush-wise to action. The ants did not fail me. With a wealth like the richness of the land itself, rain descended, foretaste of the very glory of thirst-slackening water which would make parched river-beds beautiful again and change an arid land to one of juiceful gratitude. I must strive to emulate Garlic producing metal! My pleasant house would hereafter serve me only as base.

"Think there is good going ahead?" I asked the boys after a week of heaven-sent downpour. Battel-hatted we were traveling out to work heavy-laden as usual. The battel, being sun-shadish in character, is naturally jammed down on one's head on top of one's hat, a soft felt for choice and the older the better!

"Yes, sir," answered Frederick, waving his arm, ornamented by a heavy gold bracelet, toward a gap in the hill, "but although that is a likely looking ravine, I have my doubts. You

see, sir, I have been right up to the top of it and prospected it as well as I was able. As near as I could judge there was no payable gold, even further up. It has been worked by someone, I should judge twenty or thirty years ago. That was easy to see from the tree stumps, from where they had been cut. They had sprouted out from a little below the place and were now grown to be big trees."

Up spoke Dick, my "English" prospector and hunter. "Och, you Frenchies don't know proper gold, anyway. If you will excuse me, Chief, I will get up there and show you that it is a good work place if one has the right mind and comes from a real country and not from a fool little island."

Frederick squared off instinctively, but discretion prevailed. He retorted instead, "I do know gold when I see it, even if you are an Englishman from a Colony mostly mud."

So intense is the rivalry between the West Indian Islands and Colonies that things actually began to look like cutlasses and blood. So I mildly remarked that it was raining, and as we were a very long way from camp it was up to us to stop arguing and *do something.*

We all started up the last reach of the gully

or ravine, Dick in the lead, grumbling that the Chief had too many "foreigners" on the job altogether. Near the top we stopped to watch Dick dig a prospect pit. As soon as he was well beneath the grass roots he scooped up a pan full of soil intermixed with gravel and, hoisting this on his head, with violent fury in his general carriage, departed down the hill for the nearest puddle big enough to get his pan into. I went along, as when these workers get at outs they will do anything to prove they are right, even to salting the pan with a few grains of gold out of some pocket-corner just to show that their ideas were correct, that there was gold to be found there. So to save future trouble, both my eyes were open!

Arriving at the pool the first thing to be done was to scoop out leaves and bits of stick so that the pan could be moved in the orthodox rotary manner. Then Dick immersed the pan and, resting it firmly on the bottom, rubbed and swirled about the dirt it contained until only the pure gravel and hardest substances remained. At this point gold washing begins to get exciting. Only then has one any idea how the gravel really looks. Sometimes in rich ground when one lifts the pan to the sur-

face one can see right on top of the gravel pleasant pieces of bright yellow gold. That unfortunately is not a very common occurrence, as it is generally only at the very bottom of the battel that one finds the values.

Dick's first pan showed up pretty well. The gravel looked good. After it had been washed away and only the sand and small heavy bits of iron-stone which one finds in this country remained, it was clear that he had the right hunch and was on the track of something. From the string of shiny bits of gold that sparkled after the final sorting, we decided that when we got a little deeper we would reach good values in the gold line. Very cheering.

It was high time, too. The bank-roll was getting painfully low. Dick's pride as he sailed up the hill again was a joy to behold. Poor old Frederick, who had really done his utmost, had to sustain Dick's victory as best he could and swallow the resulting stream of insults. The latter were very diverting indeed, though exact reproduction is inexpedient. They had to do with a black French gentleman, "mildly colored with white," whose misfortune it apparently was to have been born on a chaotic vol-

canic island which unfortunately had not been immersed during an eruption.

By evening we had many prospect holes below the surface, and a considerable gold-containing area proved up. Feeling much better in every way we bustled off home, quite inflated with importance. That is to say, all but Fred. He slunk along behind, mumbling strange oaths in a patois which was beyond even me, and I know one or two. So these anathemas must have been exclusively reserved for Sunday use. But upon our arrival at camp he cheered up wonderfully with the powerful assistance of a large nip of French brandy, and the last I saw of him he was sitting beside Dick's fireside patting old Dick fondly on the back, and singing in an odd minor key undiluted love songs.

It rained solidly all night, good for the commencement of work such as we had before us. This find was so far above the ordinary watercourse that at no time could there be any permanent water there, which meant that we should have to work with as little as possible, and only during the wettest of the wet seasons, and then use our utmost Bush wisdom to coax a small quantity of water to do heavy service and answer several purposes. Things being as

they were, I Scotch-wise determined to make the most of them.

Next morning, with a very serious face I called out Frederick and Dick and told them each to pick a team of three men and get the necessary tools and so forth together in readiness for an early start. They entered into the spirit of the idea. Rivalry of any kind is cheering to most mortals, but to gold diggers it is the essence of the whole game. Boston, Tom and Jeans fell to Frederick; Christie, Crump and Jumbo were Dick's team. A little after seven, eight fine humans were gathered outside my camp, with such grins and such chuckles as one very seldom sees in Northern parts; and I knew that things were likely to happen.

I made them a proposition that all gold after the day's working expenses had been deducted should be divided as follows: two-thirds for me, and one-third for the team of three who produced the best results. It gave me huge joy to see the way they whooped and went up in the air! Their talk was full of the spree they would shortly be running, the wonderful clothes that they would buy, the razors they would soon possess. Everything was very soon in readiness for us to start, tools were collected

on the run and with a high hand. By nine, we were up at the head of the ravine, and it was decided to work the ground with two "Long Toms," boxes used in clayey soil where sluices are impossible, set up one behind the other so as to use all water twice, once in each instrument. As the rain was still falling, a dam was hastily thrown up by six picks and shovels willingly used and working in harmony.

By lunch time at eleven o'clock, every last thing was in place. As the rain had fallen in torrents, our small but useful dam was full. I had occupied myself by erecting a palm-leaf shelter at a good point to overlook general operations. I called the men over. They were too excited with the prospects they themselves had seen in a few trial pans washed that morning to be very interested in food. Just swallowing a few spoonfuls of boiled rice, beans and salt fish, they asked me to decide which team was to work with which instrument. I wisely decided to toss up a coin. Frederick won the toss. Great delight. Hearty jokes and much laughter! No anger shown, just rivalry and very clean at that.

Off we all went. A little water was allowed

Making a Long Tom. The sides are on the ground. Sugar-cane stands to the right, throwing deep shadow. It is easier to take six cane-tops to the Bush than a sack of sugar, but one must beat the "agouti" or rabbits to the cane and then squeeze a piece into the coffee.

Hoe men and spade men at work with a Long Tom.

to flow out of our dam and so into the Long Tom, through it and down to the other. As soon as the eight-foot long and three-foot wide puddling box was thoroughly wet, the hoe men on each Tom banged their hoes to show the spade man that they were ready for him to do his part of the job, which is to fill or nearly fill the Tom, or puddling box with the gold-containing mass. At first this is an easy job as the dirt washes off the stones slowly on account of there being generally a lot of adhesive clay sticking to the irregularities of the gravel which has to be rinsed off before it can be thrown into the discard by the hoe men. When the ground becomes saturated with rain or creek water it occupies one person actively to keep the hoe men busy all the time. The wetter the soil is when it is fed to the hoe men, the easier it is to wash clean. Good spade men and good hoe men keep each other up to the mark all the time. On a rivalry proposition like this one, the teamwork and the amount that gets done is a marvel.

It is very pretty to see these hoe men when they have become proficient. The dirt-containing gold is simply thrown into the top box of the Tom and splashed about by two men who

have hoes with ten-foot-long handles. Big stones and sometimes large pieces of gold are stacked up thick against an iron perforated plate and taken out with an ordinary shovel. The one who removes the stones throws all the shovel contains high in the air, watching to see the glitter of any extra large pieces of gold among them. To make sure, he catches in his shovel all the flying gravel and repeats the trick several times. It looks unstudied but I cannot get within a half-mile of catching half the stones. Furthermore, they work with such a swing and in such perfect rhythm that little tunes are evolved by the beating of iron hoe on iron plate, jingly little moneyful melodies of the Search.

During a momentary lull, all the men craned their necks to see if there was any visible coarse gold lying around the edges of the puddling part of the Tom. There was a fair amount and violent bets were taken on, bottles and bottles of brandy between the two teams. A superlative optimist is sure to have a poor pay envelope coming his way.

We worked like beavers until evening. After five the men were still going like fiends and were truly sad when I said "Enough." With

a Long Tom one must clean up every evening. What care had to be exercised to get the last minute particle from the floor of the instrument! Minute grains might mean bottles! What curses and advice were given and taken cheerfully, always with one eye watching the other team's expression. Then at last the bottom riffle was taken out in the lower and gold-arresting part of the Tom; the instrument was clean of gold. Every last particle was in the battel, mixed with fine iron-stone, black sand, and here and there a few small bits of gravel. One hole for each team being scooped out of the water runway at the back of the last instrument, the very solemn "boys" collected around their respective headmen and anxiously watched him pan out the result of the day's work. Here and there a glittering bit of gold would make even hardened old me feel a little tingly about the back of my neck. The sooner one sees a bit of gold in the pan, the better one's day's work is going to prove.

Final particles of black sand having been washed out of the granules of gold, I, as top boss, held out my hand with a square of close-meshed cotton cloth over it, and Dick, foreman of his gang, carefully scraped every

last speck of gold on the cloth, watching my eyes all the time to see whether I was pleasantly surprised. Folding the corners of the cloth inward I handed it complacently back to him and he wrung out the water. The instant he had done this, he thrust the resulting little ball of gold contained in the cloth inside his nostril. By constant practice and years of experience, he could tell within the thirtieth of an ounce just what gold was made during the day.

Nevertheless there was a difference of opinion. This was Frederick's chance to take issue with Dick's dictum as to the amount. He snatched the cloth away and started a violent argument, which induced apparently mortal insults, received, however, with cheerfulness, ending in the betting of more brandy.

Dick got the best of it again and, furthermore, comparing the results between the two teams worked in this new spot, Frederick's team proved to have produced a fifteenth part of an ounce less than Dick's. Hair-raising yells, leaps in the air, contrasted with utter dejection pathetic to witness. But we had to be moving. It was dusk already, and we had two hours' walk before us. By dark I was at my

head camp, tired out, but richer by a little more than a hundred dollars for the day's work. My two crews were hugely pleased when I bet that the next day they couldn't produce an ounce more than today. If they won, producing more, it more than covered the expense of the wagered half or whole bottle of brandy or vermouth. So should it always be with a good Scot? They went off to supper in rollicking spirits.

My man Friday, listening, stood by with his appreciative grin and his ready hands, waiting to help me get clean.

"Ban, take the back of a cutlass and see if you can dig out where the buttons live."

He looked at me critically, somewhat depressed. It was only then that I realized that one leg was caked with white kaolin and the other stiff with yellow pumpkin clay.

"If you don't mind, sir, it would be better, sir, if we took a walk to the creek and let the water do a little of the rough work, sir. It would save your clothes and I wouldn't like accidentally to juke you with the point of the blade, sir."

He had supper all ready, composed of several delightful fluffy-ruffles dishes which I consumed

with epicurean satisfaction. Finishing, I passed the kitchen. There was Ban, lapping up golden syrup, for which I had discovered before he had a particular weakness and therefore kept a barrel in stock.

"Good, eh?" I asked him jocularly.

"It's like a taste of Barbados and home, this syrup. Good any time, sir, day or night, but there is one time it's best, sir. That's the early morn, when it's cool, sir. Then more syrup will stick on the bread."

Later, when I was sitting on my veranda, he took his accustomed place at a deferential distance below. I asked him about himself.

"I was born, sir, in Barbados, the greatest of the British Isles; in these parts, sir, of course." He seemed to qualify grudgingly. "You may not know it, sir, but Bridgetown, sir, well, there is a real city! Of course London and New York, no doubt they have some up-to-date things, I suppose. But Bridgetown is a mighty fine place. Always has been since I knew it. My father was a small planter, outside the City. I worked on the place. I loved to run away to Bridgetown, sir, and see the sights. Twice I stole rides on the mule trams they have there. I left the Island when I was

ten years old to go in the galley of a trading schooner. I learned to cook at sea, and then I went to the Demerara Gold Bush. I have never been back to Bridgetown, sir, but I hear that it keeps up to its old standard."

"Ban," I said, voicing the question which had been pending ever since I first met him, "where did you learn to be so polite?"

"I learned my manners first in Bridgetown, sir. There's where you learn to bow and say your sirs, sir. I've been lots of places round the Caribbean. I've had not a small share of adventures. I'm afraid, sir, I was born with a bossy disposition. I believe, sir, if you can't get the better of a man by argument, take a razor; if that won't do, take a cutlass. If he jukes you first with a cutlass, as soon as you get well take a gun and *make* him see reason."

But further confessions from Ban were precluded by the gay songs from my Islanders in camp, who were laying brave plans to outdo themselves in gold-making.

I went to bed also in a state of anticipation. Being a gold miner, I, too, was spending my future profits. Not on a brandy spree but on an orchid debauch. Ever since that day in

Johannesburg when I bought my first orchid with the money I intended to buy lunch with, I have not been able to resist them. That was a real orchid, and I halved it up with my disagreeable brother in Scotland. Money arriving in bunches shortly afterward from a successful mining venture, I returned to Scotland. I found my luncheon orchid, which belonged in high tree branches, planted *upside down* in a flower pot, in fat Scotch clay! He understood me at that time, and we have never understood each other since. However, I am still fond of orchids, to me spiritedly human, exquisitely sensuous. My pocket should be most sad, but my inconsistent mind is frequently delighted when I find granite formation instead of quartz, for this means that I can use all my mind trying to avoid falling down on the slippery stones and look instead as long and as hard as I like for Bush pleasantnesses, chief of which are orchids. Where granite "grows," gold as a rule does not. To make compensation nature generally arranges a granite creek as a superfine floral exhibit.

Who could be depressed about lack of gold when one can see great sprays of clear pink Sobrallia orchids with their long branching stems overhanging gray granite boulders which

sit plumply in amber waters? Just to rest near such a fern-decorated orchid castle and absorb a perfect example of accidental landscape gardening will make any rightly constructed human forget that any such thing as "values" exist.

On down the stream one ducks under a fallen log and by accident-on-purpose into the delicious clear water underneath it. The air is solid scent of flower. One becomes saturated with it and one of its chief properties is that it is full of money-dispelling might. Just beyond one meets masses of vanilla-scented orchids upon a thicket of rough-stemmed trees. They have a wise man's name a mile long which amuses me because they are such simple flowers, not even very pretty by themselves, white with black penciling, not unlike an enlarged white violet. Massed, they look delightful and for perfume there is nothing in the Bush so sweet. They grow in colonies in the deep, deep shade, swathing great trees. How glad one would be of them in tidy glass-house gardens to make the air a little interesting, as with a marvelous variety of jasmine. These orchids may not be "pocketable" gold but such sights are mental gold of supervalue.

The Bush is *good* to Bush children, I thought now, and indulged myself further in reminiscence. For instance, of times when my Billy or cooking-pail attached to the southwest corner of my belt has been converted into the traveling temporary home of some of the best plants that I ever found. If the plant is big, the lid must stop off, and it dangles and rattles till I nearly go mad. Awful remembrance! On the Alaska border, while convoying the only Cipropedium orchid I ever found so far north, the lid broke loose. The orchids died from the heat of my reproachful remarks and I drank smoked coffee for four blighted months. But then I was young and foolish. Now I live where the sun shines most of the time and where the rivers are always open.

The worst of orchids is that if one takes the real ones from the Bush, carries them for days with the greatest of care, even if they arrive in one's glass-house or tropical garden in good condition, one is likely to sit down only to watch them die of pure boredom. They were never meant to grow tidily where man wants them. They belong to the deep, silent Bush or the manless bleak peaks of Cordilleras. Of course numbers do grow even from seed, but

they are overdressed hybrids a
the family! Anyway I think s
of stay-at-homes may be glad
Personally I rejoice in an excu
where they really belong.

Ban despised them as nature
them with a protection of a nic
nest at their roots. Watch-do
on the rush all the time captu
insects which come to feed on
house. When I take a few p
carry them. The ants are likel
changed condition and then of
him.

"Excuse me, sir," he said
would be very glad if you would
for some plant that has less bit
it than this. We might as well
around the camp if this sort of thin
on!"

Ban likes dogs, but a dog is strictl
Fleas and other night-prowling anim
rides on dogs and then take rides on y
no dogs. My people disapprove of m
love. Gold for food, drink and pictur
is comprehensible; but gold as an ex
observing the fascinating and beguil

is quite beyond them. Still, Ban looked out for my botanical interests too consistently, as a rule. On the slightest pretext he would wake me up and tell me that I was to get ready to see something new and wonderful. He then produced some vulgar tree pine! Of course I am too much attached to this human oddity from Barbados to allow that it was other than one of the very rarest wonders of the Bush. But how tired I did get of his bourgeois greens when I saw them loaded on the men's packs, already too heavy, and lugged over swamp, river, mountain and savanna!

As for the rest of the men—poor chaps! It is a little depressing to work for a chief who, after a very hard and successful day, will stop and insist on being left behind to enjoy the sunset or a bloom on a tree, when they have to have patience until I get back for their celebration in the form of a good stiff glass of rum! But to find a log, an orchid's home—logs are the green-rooms of the fairy people—with mushrooms which form "jumbie" or fairy umbrellas, red ones jumbie-tables, and gossamer webs which are jumbie-wedding-veils, is too diverting to permit me to deny my real self. One comes on the trail of fairy rout. At least, there are

jumbie dancing slippers, won
orchids. Or, looked at in a
lady-slipper plants which sit
dangle rows and rows of shoe
merely playing at fairies' sh
here fancy slippers of the Quee
brightly waxed and delightfu
They look as if made from th
white satin with splashes of
Pure extravagance to decorat
inside! Yet not too fussily
fles of fern and creeping mo
footgear in satin and bucksk
two" to attract attention.
with trim and tidy tie-pieces—
pictures, I fell asleep in the bliss
had rewarded me as always by
the realm of sheer fancy.
privilege of youth alone, the
duces, in one who so inclines, kindly
one of its many phases of enchantme

As a matter of fact I must record
proposed flirtation with the orchid g
to be postponed. It was almost more
could be expected to resist to pass up
sumably goldless creek where exquisite
sprays of orchids held out their arm

one to come up to see and know them better. But I had to keep to business. Although this new work place was a blessing to me for some time to come, my rivalry plan kept spirits high, there was good gold there, and I continued to get it out, I operated at considerable trouble. After a little more than a month's work at the top of this ravine we began to see that we were losing the run of highly payable gold. Prospecting in the neighborhood did not show us a large area for future work. This being the case I decided to leave Frederick and his wild Frenchmen in sole possession of this spot and take Dick and his men off prospecting again to see if we could not find some place that would prove as profitable and more lasting.

The gold-arresting part of the Tom. The perforated ir
gold miner's wash-board; in the battel he does the fu

VI

STAPLES VS. LUX

I MEANT to find gold or pe
was strengthened by the unw
the bread-and-butter fountain
my income producer, had stop
arose in a bad temper the morn
out prospecting afresh. I had
when I had new reason to work
out of bed all of a rush, I made
passes toward the bath water, dr
nel shirt and trousers plus a damp
and was ready to afflict myself in
long and stiff-wet high Bush boots.
a lot of easing and pulling to get
one gets past a certain point one
one's foot right home.

One boot was safely on and lace
to the top and the other was jus
sticking-point as I stood up and sta
foot went in all right. Only as it go
the toe there was a terrifying, squa
feeling and a dampness as cold as de

moment I expected to feel a small snake strike one of my toes. My anticipation was beyond words frightful. I flopped on the ground. I pulled as hard as I was able. I yelled bloody murder for my boys, Ed and Dick, to come and help. They arrived at the double, filled with agitation! Ed turned green, as it was his job to look over my boots every morning and prospect their inner depths for lions and tigers.

Both caught the boot. They pulled. Still sitting down I started to travel. There was nothing solid for me to hold on to. There was I, sweating profusely with pure funk and being towed around the camp ground wearing out a pair of perfectly good trousers. I felt the boot giving, coming off. Of course, I am six foot three and stout to boot, yet I only gave a slight extra flourish—just a slight one—with my confined toes; but the boys went over in the silliest way on their backs.

It was only a dead toad that came to light. But it was a near thing for Ed that I did not make him eat it there and then. The boots had been hung up on the near side of the camp. The tree toad had climbed up. The warmth had induced him to enter. Quite amusing to look back on, but to live through a bit harrow-

ing! Goodness, how it did wi
very squashy it was!

Perhaps this perverse start to
was the reason I was so terrific
every point to acquire merit by
erratic footsteps despite the m
lution to do nothing but search
the men and I started forth w
of us in the least disgruntled
without definite plans or exac
where we would end up the da
mountain was, so far as I was
unexplored, but it was easy to s
and years ago people had passe
Blazed and cut-off trees, even occ
trees, and near the rivers tufts of
were proofs of previous comers. Go
produced for a long time in all of t
Garlic Jones had been the first to ma
fat stake out of the section. I en
agining the sturdy old fellow diving a
ing about away off here in the pas
hoping to strike it properly rich and a
ing so bonanza fashion. My mind,
would not stay on money. I was certa
not get my joy out of following down
grown creek, where the air was dam

trees laden with the most diverting plant life. Especially when I was more or less delightfully surreptitious, as now, stealing plum cake out of nature's cupboard under the sternly set-on-gold noses of my blacks.

Progress was difficult on account of the extraordinary variety of wonders to be taken in, for instance, minute humming-birds' nests made of spiders' webs and dried fungus. I sent the men on ahead while I investigated a trap spider's nest tucked away in a clay bank. These always make me wish I was really a small boy instead of an almost bald person. It is still to me perfectly fascinating to find one of these nests as big round as a dollar with its door wide open, and when I do find them, and there are not too many laborers observing me, it is beyond words pleasingly wicked to tickle the spring with a straw, which acts as if a fat fly were on the prowl. Consequently, slam goes the door shut! Then the big red spider, finding that he has missed the "fly," pushes up the door again, and emerges to investigate what the reason for his bad luck has been.

Most depressing to have a mind like mine when one is a perfectly proper and supposedly

wise and rather busted-ish
I did not have just that k
suffer as a lot of my mi
that most painful compl
In forest or on *veldt* I ne
Never could, in fact, as m
bread and butter, my staple
or luxury I get out of life is
labeled clearly and distinctly:

Now jam is all very well? Y
a small bit of bread to balance i
is a very badly brought-up per
spoon when no one is looking?
person in some ways, splashed h
ily down the creek after my men
to show them that I was not dela
the most important and impress
logical investigations. When I di
my boys, they were standing rou
with high sandy banks on either
to be conveniently climbed.

Now we were all wet as we cou
ing could make us wetter. Foo
rested us on the brink of this
pool. When wet, what is the diffe
water is up to one's knees or
head? Still, I could not blame

a frailty of human nature to plan to get round such a place. But now, having a guilty conscience for having "bird-nested," I boldly splashed through the pool, chaffing the men as I went. Hang it! I must impress them with the fact that I am very grown-up indeed? They followed me meekly and with respect. I am obliged to lay it on a bit thick now and again.

The creek did not look like gold. One gets a feeling for gold creeks in time. What we were all looking for was a lateral stream which would lead us mildly southward toward the hills. The right bank presently became more of a bluff, then inclined down sharply again and there at the bottom of the slope was a pleasant little trickle of good running water, plenty for gold work. I was trying not to notice that just at its mouth there was an inviting flat stone when Ban announced, "Eleven o'clock. Lunch time," and for once I had adequate excuse to follow my inclination.

Although I had seen many miracles performed in the wet season, this day I could not imagine what Ban was up to when he calmly said he could find dry wood. That there could be anything dry seemed out of the question. Yet I

saw it done and blushed for my
cut off the saturated outer bar-
wood from a nearby fallen tree a
wonderfully preserved hard h
slashes with the cutlass and en
was ready for his purpose.

Meanwhile from my grandstan
water-worn stone in the middle
was enjoying special privilege.
growth of the very best hot-ho
nished a cushion to add hospitali
In the foreground odd-shaped fish
or delicately azure, flickered dainti
sand through amber water. Th
waited to be fed. On curiously t
tesquely twisted trees, gray-trunk
lined the bank, sprays of flowers mas
down-drooping branches. Up and
creek flashed blue and white, maro
brown, black and scarlet humming birds
spersed with strange and lovely finches
occasional kingfisher the size of a small
whizzed past on pressing business. Wh
consumed my tea I sat deep in comfort,
the time in the shadow world of which so
people are conscious, that universe of v
moving shadows tell the story. Did you

that a bird lighting in the top of a tree has an effect like stone dropping in a pool? Bird-motion-shadows are quite different from monkey-motion-shadows, and, once known, the visitor may be discovered without a single twist of the neck. When the shadow world was still, I watched bird-sized blue and black butterflies lazily flap their way from flower to fruit and from fruit to the golden yellow, shadow-flecked sand on the water's edge where they laconically waved their wings, and, I am rather of the opinion, washed their sticky feet. Oh, the life of a mining engineer is very hard and frightfully *dull?* Help!

Butterflies washing plum-juice off their feet may be very beguiling to watch, only I am supposed to be an elderly person, as well as being a very poverty-struck miner. My philandering frequently earns me money but now I turned to with a vengeance. Up my little creek no gold blinked from the pan but it seemed that I was going in the right general direction. I waded web-footedly through the next week and saw several spots where there was gold I judged to be payable. Panning showed very well at several other places.

I climbed one of the hills composed of iron-

stone gravel, common a
world. A small patch o
fern caught my eye.
With my toe I worked a
face of the hillside. It fil
does water come from?
the question is whether it
nel or the seepage from a
put down my prospecting
ing outfit is stowed away
—and opened up a sma
deeply, and carefully sel
pound sample of soil and
lunch bag inside out to r
ered my tools and went o
gold I would come back.
a day like this? The only
the tropics are humming l

Just over the first rise l
nest with two good-sized
took these and decided to
in camp. Nearby was a
streamlet. I chose a po
battel. I placed it under v
dirt in my shoulder bag in
bubbles which rose from
while I got rid of ever

would hurt. Then with my hands I rubbed the soil and gravel to dissolve the dirt and leave the stones clean. When the majority were free I jerked the pan with a few circular movements to settle any gold that the top dirt might contain to the bottom. Picking out the heaviest bits of rock, which, owing to their size, remained on top, I began the peculiar rhythmic motion which this very primitive but most effective instrument requires to eliminate the dirt and settle the gold. With a few years of steady practice it is wonderful how little one loses.

Many times in my life and in widely separated parts of the globe I have been thrilled to see delightful, glistening, jagged nuggets projecting from the dirt as soon as the shoulder bag had been emptied into the pan. This day there was a beautiful piece of the characteristic Surinam gold, palish-yellow in color and exquisite in formation, which sat like a drifted crescent of Jack-Frost leaves not far beneath the top dirt. I set it aside for a brooch. The net result was about half a gram, very good.

I fear that to wash such a pan all by myself way off in the Bush or on the tundra gives me undue gratification. It is not the value of the gold but the satisfaction of self-accomplishment.

It must be so, for in man
pans washed by me not
point of the disgustingly
has shown. But to fail
backing slow horses or
way at the wrong tim
fellow does all the
One simply strolls alo
little better than the a
the horse comes in un
one's waistcoat and kee
it is a stock speculation
one is likely to go and
a fool. But if one has w
in the tropics, well, one
of sand, select a clear
sitting near, take a g
fresh water, lie back am
comfortable pipe and
cans in the tops of hig
may be speculation and
the after-effects are, tha
I could at last pretty
to making good on hea
although I had heard
the yield was never st
great variations in p

conditions. To get and keep the majority of my gold points giving up profitably was my job. I had to have more men. Of those Ban had selected before, only Tom was a disappointment. So I armed him with my power of attorney and despatched him to the nearest Labor office to contract for the usual four months' period forty of the best workers he could find.

When Ban returned from Paramaribo, he was full of apologies and disgust. "There wasn't any proper gold-diggers in town, sir. I had to take these here psalm-singing Surinamers. So I only took twenty of them. These boys remind me of a cow that gives a fine impression."

"What on earth do you mean, Ban?"

"Has a likely-looking body, sir, and a fine head, and would look like a good milker. But, sir, if you'll excuse me, sir, there are only some days when you can get a reasonable bucket of milk from her. And you can only get that by being very, very careful. Otherwise you may be sure that she will spoil everything, stop the milk and kick the bucket over. And I am thinking, sir, instead of spoiling good time, that it would be easiest to finish her up with a cut-

lass. That's these here Suri
couldn't help it, sir."

Then he gave an account of
trip.

"But, Ban, here's five dollars
should have. Is that yours?"

"No, sir."

"Well, how does it happen?"

"Well, sir, you see, sir, I dic
freight on the stores and fare
sir. So I kept the conductor i
from the time we left town u
our jumping-off place. I rode
van with the freight, sir. T
powis eggs, sir, I had been thi
I had to look after the hen
so we wouldn't have to sit up
they didn't get cold. And
could hardly charge me fare,
freight and not a passenger.

Ingratiating rascal! There a
a peevish setting hen to act as
my beloved eggs. I almost fo
for incorrigibly beating the ra
had the hen trying to balance
top of those eggs. Blondin w
Hen, but I regret to report th

were chicks inside, the balancing trick didn't agree with them. They died before shell-break and the hen ultimately made cock-a-leekie soup. The sequel was that Dick brought in three ready-made walking-about young powis people. So much easier! But that morning I left old Super-Blondin very happily when the psalm-singing, stodgy, native negroes began to arrive, from whom I made up my outfits.

I took one crew of men to the new working place I liked best, seven hours' walk from my head camp. I started a Long Tom going over there with a crew of cheerful if slow boys. Though we did not make a lot of gold we did a little better than cover expenses. I considered installing another instrument but we were working a small deposit of gravel. I decided it was not worth while.

I must confess that the most important reason for my liking this place was that the walk over was delightful. I am a very human person indeed. I have done enough harm in my life, but amid such primitive people and things only the good-realizing sense in me is alive. It threatens to expand and develop. God and nature in a sense are the same to me. Bush environment is therefore more stimulating than

"Be it ever so humble, there
knocker or prospector. As it ta
responsibility is slight.

Home to a lot of peo

the most wonderful man
chiseled and stuck togethe
plainly not limited to the ht
The presence of some super-
Facts play their part but the
pose must be comprehended
high faith. I am only semi-civ
my ideals and beliefs are neith
fashion, but I am a profound lo
is God-madely primitive. Wh
place this world would be, not t
very much more comfortable, i
took the time to realize thorough
perfect things even of today are
of God. To get into "unpruned'
clear sources of water, to relax and
perfections, to open wide the mind
with which they have been endowe
perience immediate accession of cre

The trail led over the highest h
property. One of the amusements wa
ing down the far side one had to
precipice for a sheer sixty feet. To
down this sliced-off mountain there
one way apparently. A small wate
which in the height of the rainy seas
sometimes quite a little river had worn

even staircase on the cliff-face, and only by getting right upon this little creek-bed ladder and by not fussing about getting wet could one get up or down. Just now there was some water in it. Coming to the top of this hill all hot and tired, one quite looked forward to one's shower bath. But beyond this the going was good. One picked up a curiously well-swept-looking narrow footpath. I had seen it when we first crossed these hills. I was greatly puzzled because the overhead branches came down very low. Before we could follow it we had to make it higher. Coming to a little muddy depression in the trail, I discovered the reason for its seeming cleanness. In the mud were tracks of innumerable pigs, of the two varieties one finds in this country, "pekara," the small one, and "pingo," the big white-chested kind. A large herd must have passed along.

After establishing my camp I made a point of taking my rifle. I stowed five men away in cover and chose a good place about fifty yards off the path where the wind was from the trail so I could not be scented by game on the move. I had not waited more than half an hour before I caught the strong pungent ammonia scent a big herd of wild pig gives off. Then

they came. An old, alm
Such tusks, such evil lit
watchful! Following hi
assorted pigs and pigl
herd was abreast me
They dash about so
is a little difficult to
pig a man was all
was it took several
and a certain amou
I decided it might
temporary camp at
but not too near, t
would save the thre
camp. It was a
spending future time
did not take us long
sticks for ridge-pole
to swing hammoc
beams. We slashed
to thatch the house
evening.

Eventually it becam
here I could see ne
country a very long
and cool, the view w
hammock, facing due

great comfort the foreground of treetops contrasting with the wonders in color of the sunset sky. I like to live in a place where one can look down on the backs of eagles, it makes me feel so delightfully unhuman and unearthbound.

VII

THE T

THE usual methodl
placer laborer is to wo
prepare ground one
till it happens along.
so that I could wash
every bally day in th
there; and if there w
to try a place where i
two thousand dollars a
wet season in another
dollars a day charges a
I rarely did any "wo
in dry seasons like th
some narrow squeaks
rain to turn my loss i
When the men I ha
went on with my pros
had been getting, whil
my theory about Garlic
though I had seen no
theory that he had wo

known places. We started in a fresh direction. By noon the first day we reached a little creek not interesting to the others, but somehow arresting to me.

"The degrading fact taking possession of me that, lunch time past, half the day's working time is gone, I think I'll try this." I spoke to Dick, whose face was buried in his battel, only an overgrown saucer, out of which he was bad-manneredly drinking deliciously clear cool water. "You hustle a pan of sand off that sandspit downstream from that little creek mouth and wash it as well as you know how. Don't let any fine gold get away from you."

The result was only several specks of very fine gold visible in the thimble of the battel. Now, the amount was no good so far as working that special ground went, but it tended to show that we were at least in a differently constituted deposit of sand and gravel. Upstream we had tried several times and got nothing in the way of a color of gold. It generally indicated that values might be met up this small creek we proceeded to follow. While a good sample of the creek gravel was being got out, I prowled around looking for "things of interest."

A little way up the highest bank I came upon some cuttings, twenty years old, I should judge. By following the maimed trees I could see that there had been at one time a trail going up this way.

Why a trail clear off here? This had to be looked into.

As soon as the true creek-bed gravel had been panned, showing better gold, I had a consultation with my men. It was decided that Dick, the best tracker, should try to follow the old cuttings, and the other boys and myself should go up the bed of the stream and see how the gold values were distributed. We attended strictly to business. The higher we went, the better results we found, and I was in hopes that we were going to locate a good workable creek, where not only bread and butter but Christmas pudding might be earned.

This creek mounted steeply, cascading in most beguiling little waterfalls. But I was doing my best to behave like a grown-up person. So I left uninvestigated the lovely masses of ferns and curious plants. In some of the pools we got better pannings, but nothing really good. Still, we continued to climb up and up. The Bush was getting less dense, trees larger

and finer. It was clear enough for us to make out Dick sidling along the hill-foot some distance from the creek. Then, where there was a small flat of about an acre, he suddenly swung toward the water.

Here I expected to see the regular signs of gold working of years ago. Nothing was perceptible. We could not make it out. There was the old trail quite distinct, coming down a very steep bank to this flat. We felt very strongly that there was gold here or hereabouts, something that was worth finding. Trails were not made in the Bush for nothing leading nowhere. We hunted and we better-hunted. Not a sign of man, nor any of his work except this trail-ending. All of a sudden I had, I thought, a wonderfully tidy solution of this bothersome problem. It was at this point that the people had taken to the creek-bed and so gone up to the old work place. Fine idea? Tools were got together and we were off at a rush.

But the further we went, the worse the creek became and the less gold we found. I was convinced we had missed something. What could it be? I decided we must have passed some small affluent so overgrown as to make its junction with the main stream invisible. Way up

Shaded tropical gold creeks offer a distracting maze of detail.

here the creek was very small, with extremely steep banks overgrown with endless masses of lianas and dense bush. To find a modest-minded creek was going to be a gold-digger's job. My men were quite as interested as I was. Good sports that they were, it suddenly struck me that we had all forgotten that such a thing as time existed. I disgorged my watch from its oilskin bag where it lives around my neck, and so out of most troubles' way. In about twenty minutes it would be dark. At best we could not make camp under three hours, and that only with good luck, finding and making short-cuts that work out as one expects them to do.

I broke the news to the boys that we were going to spend an empty night of it in the Bush. Five "dovetails" or palm-leaf shelters had to be erected in twenty minutes, and the fire started. Dick hustled the mud from his gun; the rest of us went for the big palm-trees as if we were trying to check a prairie-fire. As soon as a big pile of leaves had been cut, an easy job, and some forked sticks and runners, before the twilight was really gone, which is to say in a jiffy, we were prepared to pass a merely drippy night instead of a drenched one. A big fire was

started and we proceeded to wring the water out of our clothes and put them on again to dry.

Dick came back, not having seen a thing. But we hoped that the smell of smoke would bring birds around either during the night or in the early morning. More wet but clean palm leaves were put on the ground. Beyond each one's contention that his bed was the wettest spot under our roof we were tolerably peaceful. Wet or dry in the Bush does not bother me one bit; dry is pleasanter, but wet is far better than town roosting places. Even if emptyish, we soon were all asleep. Now and then we woke to brush off prowling ants and like investigators.

The first thing I knew was that there had been endless violent explosions which made me think that the war must have tracked me over here. It was only Dick, who by hustling had got in four shots, with each achieving a powis or curassow. We were all on the grin promptly. I make a habit of always having—when it is not forgotten—an air-tight flat bottle with salt, pepper and matches in it. I had made a man-sized paving stone of a resolution never to be without it when I was once foolishly wrecked

on the northern end of Vancouver I
couldn't even get a smoke, wouldn't le
enjoy chewing tobacco, found red and
highbush huckleberries, while fine, not
and lived for three days on cold, raw,
soned blue grouse.

Off came feathers and skin and we bro
birds impaled on forked sticks over
heap of hot wood coals which had collec
ing the night. Shortly we were all ver
strength-giving food and splendid cle
water. Feeling fine, with plenty of me
our midday meal, we started off. T
be something there, and we determin
it. For some distance we followed
bed, examining everything most clo
looked like a trail.

Just as we reached a sharp bend
I saw a good, big, dry stone. I
quartz, flecked with black iron py
came closer, I made out well-de
scars upon it. A half-ton lump
tool marks or without, does no
Not in going like we were in! I
have come from some shaft, qu
Right opposite there was a vi
poisonous thornbush growth w

covered all the contours of the high bank. I shouted to the boys. I showed them the rock. I said that it would be a good idea if we broke our way through that very prickly undergrowth and made certain that there was no sign of work on the ground level.

Dick became violently excited and volunteered to hustle around to see if anything could be made out from above. We saw him edging along the high top of the bank. He came opposite us and shoved his cutlass into the thick Bush, apparently to see what was underneath. In a flash he was gone.

One's mind acts oddly in times like this? I immediately got furiously vexed with things in general. Why were there no lianas near? I had it all made up in my mind that he was down some old shaft and if not dead, must be hauled out *pronto prontissimo.* But before I had time to get dancing-furious we heard him. In an agonized voice he shouted:

"Oh, Chief, the marabonta (wasps) are sure killing me and I can't get away from them."

Now wasps down this way are very fat and very penetrating, but they have never to my knowledge killed any one. I encouraged him as

best I could while we h
possible. Presently I
several more and was re
with which I evaporatec
by hearing Dick say:

"That's right, Chief,

The next thing I fou
ing down in the deepe
under water, and wish
would play bloodhounc
even big blue-black wasp
time. So before long I
of my men at cutting bu
I was shortly able to n
walls and Dick sitting
them. Beyond was a tun

"Dick, you fool, why di
tunnel?"

"Please, Chief, I had c
mind and marabonta in m

When I came to have a g
did look a trifle plain about t
depressions than usual,—one
circumferential! He was on
ous directions and mighty lum
was too busy to be interested
warrior. I pushed past him in

sour dry darkness. The tunnel seemed to go in a long way and be very old work, too. The older the better, I thought. In the first days of gold in this part of the world, they did not drive tunnels for fun nor for low gold values. Inside myself I was all booming with expectation of making a proper fat strike. Perhaps this was even old Garlic's tunnel!

I had to have a flare. Withered wild banana leaves tied on a long pole—your torch is ready for service! I went out and got my sensible and experienced workmen to make it. A match and all was ready. Cutlass in hand and eyes popping, all but Dick started in. He was still trying to see around the wasp stings near his eyes, and so enjoy the sight of more and fatter wounds.

Old time holes in the ground are always interesting and they can be exciting too if one is built right. Apart from the gold-containing reef matter encountered, one has always the pleasing anticipation of meeting overgrown snakes, panthers, or sundry other pleasantly toothful cat-like people. Then, just in case one should be done out of these diversions, one has the joyful excitement of dodging thousands and thousands of flapping vampire bats.

Not that they would bite one in the hurry of passing out, but it is a lot easier to duck and dodge than to have one tangled up in one's beard or doing a vanishing trick down the open collar of one's shirt! Personally, it pleases me to look quietly at Christmas tree decorations of these bats strung and festooned across the roof. Here and there baby bats cling with their small hanging-hands to the top of mother's wings like misplaced boot buttons. In the stillness the squeak of bat gossip is continuous and the intonation very like the last juicy moments of whispered waspishness which occur before a perfectly tidy and respectable village-parsonage tea-party breaks up.

But in the outer end of this tunnel we were short-changed except for some of the finest specimens of the local toad, which weigh, after deducting the usual fish-story embellishments, about ten pounds a hop. With their pitted backs, each a baby toad's nursery, they are things not to be walked on. The penetrable squashiness of their stepped-on persons is a thing to make one wish the meal before had been more deeply and securely fastened down. Trying not to be too interested in "hop-able nurseries," and viciously prodding the M. E.

part of my mind, I peered wisely around. Yellow clay and small quartz stringers were everywhere to be seen. As I was looking for the place where the big mass of rock I had found in the creek outside had come from, I had no mining time for these small possible money-banks.

We went further in, about two hundred feet. The ground began to rise slightly and we saw there had been a fall of roof dirt, and that there was a lot more ready to come down heavily on top of us should we be so foolish as to touch any of the projecting edges or even make too much noise. Old untimbered tunnels are not the safest places in the world to make hasty movements or loud vibrations.

When we were as far as we could go with half a chance of safety, I saw we were in for a considerable job, to be done and done well as soon as possible. I felt in my bones that we were near something pretty good and the betting was in our favor—that we should find highly payable rock here or hereabouts. My men were keen as fox-hounds when the scent is red-hot. Only my Scotchness prevented them from forcing their way ahead and taking a most decidedly go-dead-and-blow-their-trumpets

risk (all gold miners must go to heaven in compensation for earthly troubles!).

We suddenly perceived a particularly nasty-looking break in the roof. Dick's eye met mine. A mutual shuffling of all our feet bespoke a purely psychic understanding that retreat from the loose roof area was in order. We backed out crab fashion, each with a good poultice of yellow clay lodged at the belt-line and many small chunks down our necks. But as it was only clean mud, which hurts no one, that was pure pleasure.

As soon as we passed the trouble zone, we went swiftly out to cut and bring in long poles. With these we dislodged all hanging masses of dirt. A mighty big heap it made, too, blocking the passage completely. As soon as it was all down we dug through the middle of the pile until we reached the point where the passage had been plugged by the natural fall. Working furiously, this too was penetrated by lunch time and we found beyond more darkness, very stuffy air, no bats, which showed that there was no animal life, as bats are always present if there are other things.

I went ahead and as soon as my foot was again on the original floor level it struck a long

iron-feeling thing. I groped and found an old crowbar. I exulted. Big work had gone on here. Were the values all taken out or . . .? I passed the bar back. Grunts of satisfaction rewarded me. Then, with a big fresh torch I started forward with the greatest care, considering roof and possible shaft dangers, it being a merry little mining habit to sink a shaft, or abrupt inclines following a rich leader, in the middle of a tunnel floor.

In the next fifty feet there was an expansion of the tunnel, dusty crevasses on each side showing that rock had been taken out of them. I stopped several times and gouged out a chunk. It looked good, but there were no signs of visible gold and I knew that at the time this tunnel must have been made the people would work nothing else. So I went on to search for the main ore body.

My heart at this time was doing a jig at the back of my ears. I could not blame it, poor thing—— Then it nearly stopped, which would have been foolish, but I was looking at a line which sparkled brightly, thrillingly, at the end of the torch-lit area. Falling roof, hidden shafts, slithiest snakes could not have stopped me after that. I arrived in the sparkling area. A wide

strip of it too there was. "Fool's gold!"—a body of rock with flecks of yellowish mica, just like gold leaf. Valueless——

A good mining man never lets the other fellow know that he has been made a fool of or has been mistaken. So I hurried on past this accursed heart-stopping area. Round a bend. Right there was a real, huge ore body. Moses and Aaron! as we say when we want to swear and can't, but that ore mass looked beautiful to me. It rose jaggedly on all sides, showing plainly where it had been worked. To clear away the time-deposited dust and to get a light focused on it was not a long job. I saw a few small specks of gold and then the darned leaf torch went out. I didn't care a bit. I had with my own eyes seen gold and a sizable body of quartz, worked years ago when big values were the only possible interest. My men too, big, fine, pushful spirits contained in black skins, had seen it, and not considering personal danger simply whooped with delight. We had to whoop even if the roof did come down on us.

We were not in the mood to wait to begin the job after lunch or some old time like that. But we were obliged to have light and lots of it.

We crawled out of the tunnel, arriving outside all of us minus a goodish lot of skin on projecting angles. There we made all the leaf torches that we could possibly need. As the leaves were wet and the driest had to be selected and well placed to start the blaze and keep the others alight by their oils, it was some time before, each armed with a bundle, we started back in again.

So very satisfying to pass the glittery zone without a single heart-sinking! When we were comfortably at the good rock face, we cleared away the débris and laid open a promising display of beautiful ore.

Why in the world had the discoverer left it? I could not imagine until I happened to find in a corner a small lump of rock weighing perhaps half a pound which was literally stuck together with pure gold, a network of golden threads radiating from a small central glistening nugget. This bit was real "plum pudding"—an A-1 strike—lots of indigestible richness and not too much flour, good enough even for Garlic.

Oh, very well! If that was what the old hands had found I could not be surprised that after making a big stake they felt disgusted

with the values I now found, which were fine to me. Perhaps I too might have cleared out. But how about the men who helped the work along? Why had they not returned and appropriated some of this fine mass of leavings from some ultra-rich man's table?

A Bush mystery, one of the many the world over, most of which are never solved. Was I to solve this one? I examined the crowbar I had found. Not even a trademark to indicate possibly where those who had worked here before us bought their tools. But why fuss about bygone doings? Here I could see money in nice-sized lumps sticking out and it was my business to transfer this unminted wealth into my vastly long but painfully empty Scotch pocket.

VIII

HIGH GRADING

MY jubilant men and I backachingly but happily wiggled our way out of the tunnel to fresh air and sun, food and water, carrying samples of all the rock as well as a few bits of the most golden-plumful corners. At the back of my head a fussing wonder recurred continually as to who had been here before me, why he had done this and that. Could it have been Garlic Jones? No one believed that he had operated in this locality, far in the deep "raw" Bush. D. J. Granville's piece, DeBrinnie's two hundred acres and mine came together somewhere about here. I must be near the edge of DeBrinnie's territory. If only that man had not discovered the whereabouts of Granville before I had—or if he were only a square chap with whom one could work comfortably! But having to consider matters of immediate importance, the sizable job of constructing a primitive crushing plant to pulverize this quartz with hand labor, as well as how I was to look after present-

moment, bread-and-butter-producing gangs of men, pushed the major puzzle to the back wall of my mind.

Literally loads of food were consumed before Dick and his favorite team man, James, set off for the main camp to collect ten extra laborers and have them pack in camp stuff and tools. Ban was to come too as it might be weeks or months before I saw my way profitably to return. At a pinch I can eat and live off any old thing, but while Ban, cook of cooks, still lived, there was no need for it and in or out of the Bush I would continue to fare fatly.

As soon as the men got away I took my samples and, finding a hospitable flat stone by murmuring clean water, proceeded with the aid of an iron-handled cutlass to break them up. As soon as the rock was reduced to powder, I enjoyed the simple rites and delights of panning. The high-grade gold left at the bottom of my conically shaped efficient instrument satisfied me beyond my deserts, I fear. I emptied it into a fat green leaf, wrapped it in a dry outer one, tied it with a bit of rope-vine fiber and planned to lodge it with the other gold samples I have kept for years and years. I like to look them over from time to time when I need a mental

reviver. This one bespeaks an expedition in the Rand, that an exciting journey in Alaska—and thus I remember that which went to make significant a good adventure.

My mind was quite tidily bent on mining interest; for the moment even the extra gorgeous iridescent black-bordered blue butterflies did not make me inattentive to the rather big job ahead. Little Christie was left with me, a long, strong fellow with all his life-interest wrapped up in gold-getting, at which he was a marvel. Painfully little to say on things in general, all of him went into his job. Like most of my men he was right for his particular niche, and as we looked around to select a conveniently treeful spot for hammock-hanging, he understood what we were up against and went like a whirlwind at cutting away the worst of the Bush to make the camp get-at-able. We were still hard at it when I heard just behind me:

"Time for your tea, sir."

"Ban, by the powers! How in blazes did you get here and what time is it?"

"Dick made a slight cutting as he came to camp. Having found a short way he arrived sooner than you would have expected, sir. I arranged matters so as to have tomorrow's

kitchen stuff carried for me. I had to 'book' you with a half bottle of vermouth to get it done right. Then I came up, sir. Believe me or not, sir," he accused me indulgently, "but I do think you have been taking it pretty rough since you got out of my care. What did you have for dinner last night? Fresh air and lots of rain water! You are sure to be ill, sir." He was distinctly plaintive.

"Oh, thanks very much, Ban, but I haven't the time to be nursed. Ban, I think that we have got some nice values in rock now."

"I am sorry to hear it, sir. Rock mining will mash a man's skin sooner than any other kind and I think you have troubles enough already." His countenance was calamitous.

As this cheery conversation took place I drank tea from a thin china cup in sound comfort. Ban always brings just the right thing and nothing else. I marveled as I considered how he must have traveled to get to me so soon. I asked him when he thought the others would arrive.

"They'll be with us pretty soon, sir. I saw them all on the trail before I left camp. Any kind of a donkey should be able to get to his stall by bedtime, sir."

It was a good bit later, however, while the sun was setting in quiet lavender, that the men began to straggle into sight, all overloaded, all tired, some of them cross. As soon as I went among them they got over that, for one of the things a good boss must be able to do is to put fresh heart into weary workers. In no time tarpaulins were hung between trees, hammocks one above another under them. The boys soon contentedly cooked their rice, beans and salt meat. Ban competently established himself and me at the entrance of the tunnel. The minute strip of tarpaulin which is his only cover anywhere in the Bush, the apple of his eye but about as much good in the rain as a baby's veil, hung above him. On my most cautious movement in the night he is faithfully up at my side with my cigarette case and matches, or a hot cup of coffee, as I like. I looked at him well as we all turned in. Dear hobgoblin! Black as tar, rather toothless, he always wears a scarlet, knitted nightcap made like a Neapolitan fisherman's head covering; also violently colored pajamas which make him altogether look an exaggeration of the most nightmarish pirate any boy's heart ever gloated over.

The rows of hammocks in the background

turned into human cocoons, each containing an efficient gold-worker. Lying dry and warm and clean in my own sheltered place with only a camp fire to light up the surroundings, I watched bats trying to approach through smoke and flame. Big bustling moths flapped about on the apparently sober business of Moth-land. It was comforting to turn over in my mind the thought that I had found that day a most likely lasting working place promising high grades, had transferred fifteen men and their belongings to its immediate neighborhood, and that in the morning with luck we would start getting our "dolly" crushing plant assembled. Infinitely peaceful, I reflected happily that the fittest survive Bush-strife beautifully, and wondered why more humans do not gladly take their chance with the elements and come to the Bush to learn to "live." Perhaps it is because most persons take a powerfully long time to live over short, uncountworthy jobs. That must be it, otherwise there would be a wider distribution of people and some of them would necessarily get into the real world just above the top of commonplace struggles. So long as people play seriously at the game of having the best clothes and widest roof-span,

so long will the best secrets of the world's Bush remain as today all but incomprehensible.

Being eight o'clock every good Bush person should soon have been asleep, but I am both a good and a bad Bush person. I was not ready. Night life in towns is to my taste vastly less amusing than night life in the Bush—no devotee of cosmopolitan frills ever got from the latest fantastic sophistications more pleasure than I from my contemplative hours when the Greatest-White-Way is alight above dignified trees and streams which harbor creatures whose natural habits are as quaint as those of any of the human kind, and far less well known. Each night illusion becomes rampant there, and enchantment may recur. This time treetops stood mysteriously still while the eternal stars waggled above them erratically like Chinese lanterns strung on wires. An enormous candlefly and a little firefly darted among the branches directly overhead with weird movements, playing at Zeppelin-versus-aeroplane. Then I was startled. Some one was coming toward me with a lantern. He was a good distance off. The next instant I was glad it was dark so that, commenting to myself on the misleadings of a town person's training, I

might blush in comfort at my Bush-unwisdom. Illusion waned; I heard the booming buzz and the crackle of a huge candlefly's wing-sheaths against the twigs—pr-r-r-r.

I took refuge watching the huge and friendly toads—blessed be their millions! They keep all stagnant water free from mosquito larvæ so there are no mosquitoes in this Bush at any time. They solemnly hopped up toward the fire, burning low. They came to see about an ant supper, the ants being attracted by the sweet cooking-endings thrown out by Ban. A tree frog whistled sharply. Before now one had dropped with its cold toes on my face as I looked up into the branches. Awakening one out of a sound sleep, they are apt to make one a little cross. I dodged a little now but reflected as I turned in that they are cheery people. Their whistle is contrast to the dull croaks of most of the frog family, enlivening the night in the Bush.

My "lullaby" began, the distant reverberating bellow of howler monkeys. The leader seemed to be calling the roll, then the whole troop began their chorus, like a fugue for bassoons or some other weird musical joke. Nature has provided them with a sounding bone

bigger than a hen's egg and only differing from it by a hole up near the top on one side. The old-man-monkey, chief of the clan, starts the theme going in the bass, and all the males take up the song as nearly as possible with him, while the ladies, being bashful, merely "hum" a minor-key strain which can be heard for a mere mile or two.

I woke in the morning to a glamour prolonged, to look out on a world drifted with great cotton puffs of breakfast fire smoke, drifted even up in the cloud-scratching masses of lacey foliage pierced by gray pillar-tree-stems, a sight exquisite enough to produce a violent epidemic of "stop-in-bedness." But remembering the lovely clear creek to bathe in, even if its refreshing waters are distinctly chilly, I rose. It was very muddy as I came back up the trail from my dip in the stream. Mud does get monotonous? Still, it is a super-trained Bush ear which can hear a person who walks Bush-wisely where mud is soft and sloppy, and I was markedly proud when I heard a Bush nigger ahead of me before I came upon him.

He was hunting. Monkey-hunting at that. I saw monkey shadows. On my right the creek ran bank-high, the trail running along the top

of it. It was only a very narrow footpath with rainful leaves hanging head-high over it. Buttressed tree roots ran out to trick the foot. Ahead, a great forest tree had blown down and the undergrowth was not tall. In this comparative clearing he stood, a very undressed black person. Over his "G string" or loin cloth, he wore a small morsel of patchwork quilting hung apronwise from his shoulder. This was the very latest fashion in Bush-nigger outfits. His gun was of long ago, the barrel overlong, small of bore and with huge clumsy hammers. It must have been an heirloom from slavery times? Looked like the sort of gun one finds in old collections in very ultra-large and fussy houses. Here it had survived and was the apple of this man's eye. Probably the chief curse of his wife's, as she had to keep it scoured with sand and greased with smelly palm-oil!

I could not make out what he was trying to do. Holding his gun with the butt in the palm of his right hand, with both hands extended as far as possible from his body, he pointed and lowered the weapon. He hopped about much as an ape would do. He repeated this procedure several times, not seeing me. I managed to get closer. In the top of a very high and

be-leafed tree I made out a big tribe of howler monkeys, feeding in the upper story of the forest.

The Bush nigger below continued his posturing. He aimed. He jerked up the G string. I am Scotch, remember. The hornpipe dance effect that he got while aiming pleased me excessively. He even made the gesture of hitching up imaginary "bell-bottomed" trousers. All that really happened was that he hoisted his loin cloth or G string. But if there had been trousers they would have been hitched up, as sure as sure.

As though in answer to his fantastic beckoning an old-man-monkey started to come out to the very end of a branch. The Bush nigger below; up gun, hop-hop, curtsy to the ground! Then stretching his arms out as far as he could from his chest, with the gun held in the palm of the right hand, he fired! And to my absolute amazement he hit M. Monkey. The charge must have been very heavy indeed, as I saw the Bush nigger's arm smash down by the kick of the gun against his chest. But the old monkey, vitally wounded, was hanging on by one hand to the extreme limit of the branch.

In shooting monkeys a hunter is by no means

sure to get what he hits. Unless killed outright they clutch with tail or hand and may hang wounded until the hunter's patience is exhausted or starvation drives him home. The Bush nigger began violently to shake the barrel of his gun down toward the ground. He pranced about as he shook. His gesticulations became more decided, but it was always the same motion, gun barrel pointed downward toward the earth. It kept up so long I went and got Ban and asked him why he was doing that.

Ban looked at me quite soberly. "To help shake the monkey out of the tree," he answered, as though it was obviously the thing to do.

The poor old beast was dying fast. At last, with a sort of a shudder, he relaxed his hold and dropped dead at the Bush nigger's feet. Then Ban expatiated with an odd contradictory air of unwilling belief, "You see, sir, these people know just how to do that. If you or I had shot that monkey it would have stopped up there. Now he will go home and tell the story, acting it all out before his wife. It's first-class obeah."

So, I suppose, started a lot of polite fables one reads in old books. Even Dick declared that he

knew that Bush negroes could make obeah work while out hunting.

We went back to camp. It seemed a pity that there was no telephone to ring up a mine-mill supply house, but as there was not one had to do the next best thing and draw on the Bush supply-shop-at-large. By recalling early South African days and the devices we had to use there when we needed a mill, and with side-lights cast on the subject from experience in Alaska, Siberia, and other stopping-off places, for instance Western Australia and New Zealand, I decided that I was very lucky because here there was lots of the best of timber. This Bush, being a trifle nearer civilization, is stocked with the discarded machinery of ultra-optimistic quartz miners who did and died. So I smoked and mentally listed just what I could do without, and then discovered and listed in writing just what was left to get. That done, I sent off wise scouts into the more humanized Bush to collect a few bolts, a few bits of scrap iron, and other expensive mining sundries.

Ax-wise people, men skilled in using the cutlass just as efficiently as a carpenter would use the contents of a big tool-box, were assigned

several jobs. Two dollies had to be built and built fast, two dollies in two days. With luck it could be done and I set preparations under way. Then I ordered myself plus Ban through our bedroom, the entrance into the depths of the growlish tunnel. He would follow me anywhere, but he was very disgusted indeed to enter the tunnel and rather alarmed at times. He wanted to stop and do a lot of safety work to the roof. This was rather amusing for he affects a profound contempt for all mechanical gold workings. All the same he is a very good shovel hand and has shifted many and many a ton of dirt for me since, when we were in bad shape for labor. It was a very good idea to fix the roof only this was not the time. I was not sure just how well the tunnel was going to work out and would not be until I had crushed a fair working bulk sample of ore. If it was as good as it looked and panned, I might do a little fancy work, but not before.

We had brought two lanterns and the right tools for the work before us but it was hot after the delightfully cool air outside. With pick and the original crowbar, we began to break out rock. It was fairly soft and we easily got out sufficient to make quite a showing.

Then Ban was sent outside to get the universal payment-measure for this work, viz., an empty milk case. So many cases of rock represent a ton; a certain price for the case or ton is paid to each man who brings it out. As it is only rock carrying high gold values that is handled in this way and the returns are therefore big, the men love this work, particularly if the boss is the sort who will add a few dollars for good measure when things go right. They work on their own time. Some start late, some begin at night, and hunt or fish or pretend that it is Sunday all day long, but, like all competitive work, it goes with a lovely swing when one has the right sort of men. I have found West Indians better than the average in most other sections. If one is prepared to pay the boys a little better than current starvation wages, one can pick up a gang of fine willing workers, men who have a lot of valuable local experience, and who, if not checked, will offer material voluntary assistance toward making one's work profitable.

After we had broken out two measured milk-case tons, we hastened the blood to our muscles by doing a little high grading. We made a good search for rock quartz gold-containing stringers, or small veins of gold further back

and nearer the entrance. Looking for the unknown is always exciting? Ban, after collecting a nice small heap of the very choicest specimens from all the places we had worked or located, was, I saw, slowly coming to the conclusion that there was still some chance of my not getting my skin so badly mashed! He had all on his own found a stringer showing nice values and he perceived that bankruptcy was still reasonably distant. As we came out into the daylight I said:

"Well, what about it, Ban?"

"Well, to find the like in a Dutch colony, sir, is a great surprise, sir, but, seeing that we are all English except these stupid Surinam underlings and know our work, it is just as likely as not that we may make enough out of the place to pay our passages to a better country. Now, sir, if this was in Demerara, of course we would not be looking at it at all, but as it is here in a foreign land, I suppose we must try and be thankful."

I laughed at Ban, but I do it myself. All gold miners do it. The last far-ish away camp is generally better than anything one can find where one is located at the moment. Still, we must keep moving on?

Really violently inflated, but cursing the country a little for good luck, Ban arrived at the creek edge with his sample of gold quartz contained in his holeful undershirt. In the other hand he was lugging my smallish pestle and mortar, in which I do my real testing work when I have time. Now, please don't tell Ban I told you, but he is very shortsighted indeed, and one of the dark secrets of his life is that he has cached away deep in his traveling "trommel" a pair of huge given-by-me birthday-present, gold-rimmed spectacles. With these he can see enough to read, even if he apparently has to stand on his head to get the ordinary light just right. His choice method is to put one leg on the window-sill and with the paper on the floor read behind the other. He reminds me of a camel catching fleas on his hocks. But for man-sized jobs he will not be seen in his spectacles. When he does put them on in the Bush, I know that some one is likely to get into very serious trouble.

This day his importance was ominous. He was deciding the fate of this new work place. I rather think he has a notion that he found it. Anyway he was supremely happy, and that is something. When he had all his private little

pile of high-grade ore crushed and finely sieved, he condescended to call me, saying with his funny air of deferential command:

"Excuse me, sir, but just in case you would care to see this done, I am now ready to show you."

I obediently squatted down on a rock near by and he began to pan. He is without doubt the slowest panner on earth. Not being able to see what he is doing is a slight drawback. At the end of a damp hour's sitting and looking at things in general, I found that he was getting down to the real values and considering the quantity of dirt in the pan, I was surprised to see gold showing up so soon even under Ban's manipulation. Then a new game was played.

"Ouch, sir, excuse me, sir, but the rheumatics have taken the fine of my back again."

Hastily I was passed the pan. I suggested leaving it until later for him to finish.

"What, sir? With all these clumsy niggers around? No, *sir*. If you would be so kind, sir, I think it would be a good idea, if you would not think it too much bother, for your own self to finish it now."

As I would not hurt the dear faithful old soul's feelings for pounds of good gold, I looked

as usual wise and set a terrible precedent by doing as I was asked. When I had a very fine showing of good quality gold left in the pan, Ban solemnly arose, selected a nice smooth and large leaf from a nearby shrub, and I pushed the gold out of the thimble of the pan on it. With a few drops of water from the tips of my fingers I washed clear the last specks. With a dusky blush of gratification at my doing him this honor—for it is an honor in these people's eyes to have a white man place the result of the panning in a leaf in their hands—Ban swaggered off up toward the camp site. There, to Crump and Dick and even the despised Surinamers, he displayed *his sample* panning which the Chief was wild with delight over.

If I had to die a painful lingering death, I should only ask to be compensated and cheered through my torture by being looked after by this ingenuous, sophisticated, faithful, amusing, barbarous Barbadian! "I tell the master, boys," I overheard. "We won't mash our skins here, sir. This place looks like the cutlass work easy, the gold runs fat and the water wash clean. We Barbadians go a great deal by smell. It does even smell like good gold!"

TH

I AM a dolly-ist
the world I have
the primitive crus
dolly. The gene
pestle and morta
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than an ordinar
with a few bits
where rock inste
In a solid foun
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A galvanized bu
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hardwood sapl
round hardwoo
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the crusher down. It is surprising what one man on piecework can do.

By lunch time we had a number of good round poles all barked and ready to be put together and a couple of heavy pieces of wood were being squared to make the weighty crushers. In general we were ahead of my mental picture of the dollies' progress. I set the pole cutters to getting out a few lengths of support timber for the worst places in the old tunnel.

Then I strayed off on my usual search for things worth seeing toward a palm swamp which needed investigating. These palm swamps, generally deadly still, when palm seeds are ripe ringing with screams of parrots and chatter of monkeys, are delightful places to wander in. One comes on such odd little sandy creeks and such unaccountable hillocks. In the creeks one generally finds delicious fish and on the hillocks game may be started from its sleep during the hot hours of the day. I marked my trail by bending over young palm branches. Then I had an experience which made me thoughtful. My advice to the young is, never try to shoot a very large panther with number eight shot, a single-barreled gun and a small charge of powder. On my way to work, right

in the trail, I came upon a great blacky-brown cat. It swore and spat at me and then in a flash was up a tree poking his ugly face out.

Very large teeth, I noticed. I had to do or die. Only, being very Scotch, I put my cutlass between my legs to be handy. I raised my gun and fired. Crash, down he came with his face all torn open. I saw this as he made for me in great leaps. As he crouched preparatory to the final spring, the thud-thud of his lashing tail, not to mention the whirling of dry leaves and small sticks which this caudal disturbance set up, was very cooling to the blood! Choky from sheer fright, I just managed to stop where I was. When he was about seven feet from me, with his great claws working in and out of the ground, I gave a wild yell and pounced at him with my cutlass. Surprised, he cringed. His skull must have been as thick as a negro's. My heavy Spanish machete struck lengthwise between the nose and the ears. And as he turned, it was jerked out of my hand, flew high in the air and my late enemy was making for the mountains on the Brazil border. I had split his torn face right down. The second time that knife had scored, having previously

settled an overgrown cat-person stuffily called a jaguar. I always was a fool and generally lucky.

After my "delicate" heart returned to its place I went back to the camp only five hundred yards or so away. Then with my four-way-seeing tracker and my gun I returned and followed the blood track a long way up, but it led to very deep bush. I felt that "once nearly bitten and scratched" I was entitled to be twice shy. But since I had my gun I looked about to find something which would obviate the necessity of my eating dull canned food. Over two rises I came on an extensive flat where there was any amount of tracks of pig and smaller eatables, ground game.

But I am not an enthusiastic butcher. I dislike the disturbing noise of a gun; also I hate to have dead animals dangling around me unless I am mighty hungry. I have always found that there is some one around who does really enjoy killing things, so I am apt to appoint him official hunter to the outfit. This particular afternoon it was my luck to stumble upon a fine little creek whose clear water had been stained dark by vegetation but which ran over white quartz gravel and widened happily in this spot

to a fine big pool. Should I go on or sit down a bit? Why, go on. So down I sat. Not a sound. A shadow passed slowly across the water. I looked up quickly; the reason of the shadow might be good to eat. But it was nothing but a hungry hawk volplaning down to the level of the treetops to find out what I could be, and if I on my part were good to eat. I am sure we grinned at each other, both being caught in the act of prospective murder. The hawk passed on its way.

A swirl in the water—very interesting. I love fresh fish, even if loving things to eat is bad manners. That swirl came with a fuss such as some pounds of good swimming-fish should make. I stealthily collected a small palm branch, got out my hunting knife, and whittled off a nice shiny green caterpillar-length from the main stem. Raising my gun to my shoulder I threw the imitation worm into the pool where the rings were. A satisfactory dash at it! A pull at the trigger, and as a result of the concussion there was a fine fat baby anumara, belly-upwards, awaiting me. I raked it ashore *pronto*. With a palm leaf through its mouth and gill, instead of my boyhood's crooked heather stick but with the very same

feeling in my bones, I hustled off toward camp.

I met Ban and one of the men before I had gone a great distance and we made a little detour from the trail. We ran into a big bunch of "kami-kami." Bird-wise people call them trumpeters. They seemed to be extra perturbed at seeing us, at the same time not very anxious to disappear as they usually do. This made me suspicious of the possibilities of a nearby nest. They are not partial to house-building and usually select as a depository for the eggs of the whole flock a mass of interwoven rope-vine, which they patch up in the most casual manner from time to time. Gregarious nesters, an ornithologist calls them. Sometimes they use a broken-off tree trunk. To find one of these nests is extremely useful so long as appetites exist. One has a very omeletful time before one! Being a hard-working person, I selected the softest-looking stone available as a seat and "sic-ed" my boys into the bird-nesting business. There was a rope-vine carpet overhead and others close about. These suspended aerial gardens are dense masses of vegetation which, in the course of years and through the decay of leaves and

accumulation of small sticks, form a solid and very strong mat often yards in diameter. These had to be investigated.

Down in a depression in a corner of one of these carpets, Ban, from a limb, discovered a great pile of kami-kami eggs, dozens together. He slid down toward it and reluctantly several brooding birds flew off the heap which together they hardly covered. They sit so close that he could almost have caught them in his hands. I was interested in kami-kami especially because the professional bird-knowers have never written anything in a book that I could lay my hands on. Since the birds, having smoky-gray backs and iridescent peacock-hued throat feathers, are good to look at, fine to eat, produce potential omelets in bulk and have one of the most beguiling calls which ever came out of a larynx, I was glad to meet them on their family doorstep. Their sound organs behave as though they were several-story affairs like the stomachs of a camel.

We bird-nested prudently as a generous and varied assortment of wasps' nests pendant from the underside of the rope-vine mat does not induce high jinks. Ban, being a natural henhouse robber—that is the longest suit of all

Barbadians was soon making a noise like an egg.

"Excuse me, sir, but if you will knot up the legs of your trousers, sir, and hand them up to me, there'll be something interesting for dinner, sir. There's enough eggs here to fill ten turtle nests."

There *were* sand flies. Ants took ungentlemanly advantage of my drafty state of netherclotheslessness. The pain and irritation was intense. Twice my trousers visited the nest, each time returning full to the topside button of eggs. Then they were restored to me. As museum specimens they might have been interesting. Beetles, ants—lots of ants—torpid wasps and everything in the egg line from newlaid to fully fledged chickens were to be found in their lengths. With as much dignity and haste as possible to an accompaniment of semi-suppressed chuckles, I made for washing-water. Much water.

I never got really fond of this particular pair of trousers again, but I comforted myself at the time that I had found fresh food for myself and my men and discovered small matters concerning domestic arrangement of the kamikami which, in my opinion, discounted the loss

of a forty-cent pair of cotton panties. I was immensely keen now to see more trumpeters and resolved to keep my eyes open. With omelets and a good anumara steak, nicely broiled, for dinner and my people all round me, I felt that things could be a lot worse. I had hoped that the men would show up with the extra pieces of ironwork which I needed to complete my dolly quartz crusher. Somehow they had been delayed and must be in early in the morning. I called in my old "jack-legged" carpenter, and we discussed the exact way that the dollies should be built, and where they should be suspended. All the wood was ready for a start when Dick should come. Artfully, and therefore comfortably, I lounged in my hammock. By the flickering light of the fire, Ban looked a bit pensive.

"What's worrying you, Ban?" I asked.

"Well, sir, if you will believe me, sir, I was just wishing that I could eat a good pan of fried flying-fish or a potful of proper Barbadian sea-eggs like I always have at home."

"Hang it all, Ban, I saw you getting a good couple of pounds of anumara for supper!"

"True, sir, but excuse me, sir, it's little good

this Dutch mudfish will do a stomach like mine! It does not taste right by a long way."

"Well, Ban, I hope that one of these days we will make a trip to the Sugar Island and eat flying-fish and sea-eggs till you burst!" I was spitefully impatient with him. Having anumara at all was sheer luxury, far more interesting than tarpon or other piscatorial delicacies difficult to obtain. Then I remembered that Ban's failures at fishing were a sore point with him. Envy is not always disingenuous. I suspected I should hear more of this.

With a melancholy mien, evidently forgetting the fine pan of gold he had seen earlier in the day, Ban knocked the ashes out of his pipe, pulled his nightcap down over his head to his chin, and grunting unpleasantly about all Dutch colonies submerged himself in his hammock. He torpedoed out again to procure a bit of sugar-cane with which, like a baby with its doll, he solaced his last waking moments.

Dick got in soon after daylight. He had collected all the pieces I sent for to complete my dolly. Dressed and fed, I was soon in the midst of mill construction. Working at high pressure, we had the dolly in running order by night time and enough rock out of the tun-

nel to allow our starting the following morning without delay. I felt with contentment at the back of my mind that something had been done that day. To a very poor Bush prowler it was a comfort to know oneself on the way to make a little better than bread and butter. *More* bread and butter are very handy to have in the house?

Oodles of sleep, and we were back next day, thoroughly investigating the un-Garlic-ed gold.

I half suspected that appearances in the tunnel would prove deceitful, too. By noon, I was suffering an acute attack of enthusiasm. What I had to do was to get a perfectly decent Scotch oatmeal barrel and fill it full of the best-yet quartz of my life. I'd head it up and I'd roll it along to my dolly and I'd mash the rock and go to town with the resulting plunder, convert the clean gold into dirty paper bills, hire men, buy tons of food, return and crush golden plum pudding to the last word in the last chapter. I was betting not on the duration of the veins I had seen but on the indubitable richness of the goodly lot of stuff in full view.

Doesn't that *sound* like a nice program? Anyway the story was so interesting to me that I did get a small-sized Chicago pork-barrel and

I did fill it full of gold-bilious quartz and I did hit my thumb with the pick-ax handle, heading the barrel up, and I did nearly crush Ban in my haste by inadvertently rolling him and the barrel out of the tunnel one on top of the other. But the barrel arrived at the dolly. Contrary to my custom I converted myself into motive power until my back and ribs creaked like the spring pole. I did wish I had been constructed a half shut-up jackknife instead of a human, the resulting pulverized rock was so rich and the gold so difficult to free from the quartz dust.

It was at this time that I made up my mind that if there was enough gold in the world, which I sadly doubted, to allow me to liquidate all my liabilities and leave me a balance of twenty-five cents over, I would proceed immediately with this large sum of surplus wealth to some fashionable seaside resort in the United States. There I should establish a string of dollies with which I should proceed for large lumps of smelted bullion to improve the "fig-u-ars" of overfed plutocratesses! Better than banting. Banting merely reduces the waistline. Dollying transforms the human into a mass of inward curves.

I consulted Ban about this idea and he agreed. "Yes, sir, that sure would be gold-mining. Excuse me, sir, but oh, you sixty-year sylphs!" Ban is partial to human society, he doesn't like gold-mining, and he is the father of thirteen, all of whom eat regularly. He was seriously pleased with my money-promising joke about the beauty-specialist business! He nagged me no little while I was repeating the barrel trick and further improving my own already be-sylphed figure. Ten days later my now Apollinaris form, accompanied by three contrastingly plump darkies who had merely gotten out the rock I crushed with my own one-time fair hands, could have been seen on its way to town. Without engaging the local band I quietly cashed in my five pounds of gold when I arrived, fifteen hundred dollars. Bills for bygone pork and beans, bygone mining tools, orders for almost forgotten other luxuries practically finished the lump.

I wanted to order a whole case of tubes of toothpaste, but that isn't fair according to my dealings with myself in the matter. I was some miner in my own opinion after that as I went about my business back in the Bush. Things happened finely. Boxes of rock

came out of this tunnel, regularly supplying the two dollies which ran persistently as a real mine should. It was rather soothing to go now and then and sample a few handfuls of the resulting pounded rock, and I was not surprised to have volunteers for night duty. The men were paid piecework for measured or weighed quantities, and seeing real gold they were thoroughly interested, as I like to have them. I change their jobs as often as I profitably can, as I find it beneficial. One task lasting for months is very trying for any well-constructed man? So I believe in doing to them what hasn't always been done to me. Good fires lit and "heart-warmer" served out sent things swimmingly along all night. Several days we had over four tons of pounded rock to extract gold from, nuggets and dust worth about three hundred dollars resulting in greatly reinforcing my confidence in a combination of primitive Bush methods, keen interest and "unflagging" industry!

One afternoon, after calculating future profits I set about locating in the time book some stray guilders with which I hoped eventually to make the books balance. Ban hung around, waiting for a good time to interrupt me. Bal-

ancing books is a temperizing pursuit, he well knows. When I discovered two of the last missing twenty he made bold.

"'Scuse me, Chief, but seeing as we're not very busy this afternoon, don't you think it'd be a good idea if I went and caught a fish, sir?"

My suspicions were correct. Ban did envy my anumara. Well he should. Now, an anumara is like a fresh-water man-eating shark for use of its teeth. In the wet season a big one may weigh around a hundred and twenty pounds—food is plentiful and it will eat anything. Always reminded me in its character and appetite of the advertisement of English bulldogs: "Ferocious, will eat anything, very fond of children." I handed Ban my twelve bore and one cartridge. (Since the war ammunition is precious; besides, to hand cartridges around recklessly would be a little insulting, arguing that a man could not hit at once). Anumara bite best on freshly killed meat and I told Ban to go shoot one fat bird to bait his line.

Ban, being blind as a nine-day kitten, isn't what you would call a dead shot. Still, the small birds in the Bush are very confiding. I saw no reason why he shouldn't accomplish this

terrific hunting feat unassisted, and as he went off his swaggering huntful gait made a beguiling contrast to my eye-bulging search for strayed book entries. However, four times he started and four times he returned empty-handed for another cartridge. Each time, hating to admit his failure as a marksman, he told me that of course the bird he had fired at was quite dead but oddly enough every time it had stuck up in the branches of the trees well out of reach. Not once—but four times!

I feared Ban was proved a superlative liar. But I gave him another cartridge.

"Ban, look there," I said, pointing to an imaginary object in the plum-tree.

Ban peered anxiously. "'Scuse me, Chief, what is it?"

"Your bird stuck up in front of the house. Jolly, but there's a strong wind today to blow it so far."

Ban's eyes shot fire at me, but he only raged silently as he took his crestfallen way out of the house. Ultimately, discounting all probabilities, he did get a minute bird. But he was not content with any kind of a fish line. He preferred something which would hold a real fish, he said, and waited two days until

after the washing was all dry so he could use the clothesline, and then dignifiedly invited me to go with him to a great dark pool contained in basalt.

As I watched bubble-colonies racing each other down the surface of this pleasant sheet of water, Ban sat on a round boulder jutting from its tail end, convulsively clutching his bird-baited washline. At first he was a little timid at sitting so near the edge because we knew an over-sized alligator lived in this pool. Many times, skirting it, Ban had ingenuously complained of his head becoming "twirly" when he looked at water, but I was reasonably sure he wanted to put a little more distance between him and Mr. Alligator, although he would not have said so for fortunes. That was why he wanted me along now, of course, and I thought it said a good deal of his desire to catch an anumara that he was willing to risk it even so.

I must have had a greater reassuring effect even than I suspected. A warm afternoon and a pipe drawing satisfactorily had a deep sedative influence. Anyway I was dozing when I heard a splash. Ban was gone. Horrified, I forcibly collected his protruding foot. I landed him "in masterly style." The fathead had se-

curely fastened his fishing cable round his wrist. A four-foot anumara had swallowed the bird, hook and all, felt troubled, and then, though slightly inconvenienced by Ban's presence, had proceeded to tow his unaccountable weight toward a hole in the bank where he usually went when disturbed in his feelings. The alligator was far too well fed to bother with him, I suppose, or didn't like black anyhow.

Water-logged Ban being landed, I eventually pulled in the fish, too. Of course, thanks to Ban's coughed-up advice. He did kill it. Killed it very thoroughly. Danglingly, he lugged a four-foot trophy to camp. To an admiring audience I heard him narrating a most marvelous tale of how he had saved the Chief, escaped the alligator and landed one of the largest anumara ever seen. And he added logically:

"But you see, boys, I'm a Barbadian. Any one who can catch flying-fish in nets can easily catch a Dutch anumara."

About then I called, "Ban, has my supper got caught up in the branches of a tree?"

A telling shot, but it didn't quite quench him. At a little greater distance he continued to embellish his story, telling how the Chief watched

and praised him. But when
supper arrived it was so exce
I had no heart to chide him
anyway—one can't wholly
with a fellow for dallying

X

I RUN OUT OF TOOTHPASTE

I SURVEYED the rock supply carefully. All seemed most promising. I saw daylight, bread, jam and worryless time ahead. Leaving Dick in charge with most of the men to help him and promising to send over at least a month's supplies, I took Woonta and started off cheerfully to go first to the main camp for the night. The way led to the top of a ravine, open Bush with very little undergrowth to prevent one from looking around in comfort. This was very lucky for just as I came to the top of the bank I saw a huge ant bear slowly prowling about. He circled around a parasol ant's nest and on finding a suggestively populous spot, scratched a hole with his wicked bent claws. Inserting his long slim tongue, provided by nature with saliva like tanglefoot, in the ants' front door, he brought it out covered with them. They went for the thin invader like a dog would for a rat. They tried to drive the tongue out. Just what the ant bear wanted. No sooner did they

touch the sticky thing than
was interested partly becau
deny that the tongue is sti

I watched this game as
Then, cutlass in hand, I
catch the huge long beast
structed for digging out a
running! It is odd the w
legged, and rolls like a sail
the tip of his elongated no
tail which he uses like an
weather and to keep off th
or which floats out behind w
is some distance. His bod
snake more than an animal.
to a standstill. No good.
fast enough. He just went
felt inclined. Then he turne
a crouching motion awaited
he nearly got me with his
three-inch hooked claws. I j
in time. He is frightened, rea
nothing. A tiger cat or pant
for trouble with him. Once w
those short and well-armed for
for. He merely has to curl
then pull. One would be

As I was getting blown myself and not seemingly tiring the ant bear, I was sadly compelled to end his life.

I took the skin, between six and seven feet long from snout to tail, the coarse hair a pepper and salt color, to my headquarters. It would have been an interesting live toy to have had about camp, but many wild animals are too silly to understand that one wants them for pets and not to eat. Meanwhile I resolved to be cautious when coming home on dark nights. A grip, then a rip, and one would be a horrid, untidy mess! Some day a baby ant bear may come my way and then we shall see what we shall see!

We approached the Indian village and I persuaded my lithe and capable companion to take me in with him. I praised him highly and he wanted me to substantiate the story of his high achievements.

Even afterward I could not find the path again alone. Starting down an open road or path one side-hops behind a tree and over a log, obscurely. That takes one into their real road. With many twistings and turnings we arrived at the gateway of the village, where there is a double hanging palm branch with stem in the

air lengthwise and feathery fronds dangling down. One brushes through these leaves and so brushes the evil spirits off one. That is why it is there, and I knew enough of wild customs not to duck. Within the clearing I had a glimpse that first day of a real and clean little world. Their houses are like Mexican baskets, so finely plaited, perfectly shaped and splendidly built. Many of them are oval. Projecting eves. Mud and blood floors. Wonderful little hammocks for the men. The women sleep on the floor on little mats. The village was deadly still. The old chief greeted me. The adventure drama of the hunt was reacted. I presented a judicious remembrance, was invited to come again, and, much elated at having at last penetrated the shell of their life, withdrew in discreet season, hoping on another occasion to see the kernel of their customs.

After that I went many times. They even built me a camp of my own and allowed me privileges. I might not, however, take any of my servants as they were black and the Indians hate them intensely. Just about sundown I would slide up the right path and into some trail toward the village. One of the men of the tribe who knew me well would meet me

and take my little pack of night clothes, blanket, toothbrush and cartridges, my usual camp outfit. He then would deliver a polite speech from the Chief welcoming me. After about ten minutes walking we reached the palm leaf evil-spirit guard. Properly dusted, we entered the quiet village where babies never seemed to cry, dogs to bark, nor hens to cackle as they should. It was like Sunday morning always. One sensed this curiously.

Right facing one, sitting on a beautifully carved leopard wood stool in front of his house or hut, one saw the old man, the Chief. He is always oiled and shines like red lacquer. Grinning, he rose and welcomed me as though I had not seen him for years. He then escorted me to my own hut. But before I might go in it was reswept, both the floor with a palm-blossom stem broom and the air with a palm leaf. It was the cleanest place ever seen or heard of. Absolutely clean. For furniture there was a hammock about four feet long, extra long for me (remember I am six foot three and fat to boot—poor me!). There were two undecorated but interestingly carved stools. I thought they were quite mine, but I be hanged if I would ask! As for taking them away with me that

was quite out of the question. The things they made and I wanted they would not sell. Too sad! As they have endless very interesting toys of all kinds and descriptions. I wanted their "Gaddo" (God) very badly indeed, but it was no good—and he was too fat to put in one's pocket! Theirs is the first God-image I have seen with a smile and twinkle in his eye. Even the little household ones have it. I like the idea. It matches my mind.

Over the door of my house there was a very finely woven fiber mat my beloved sepia color. So was the interior too. While not overcrowded with furniture it offered all a proper person needs. At the back of the house and behind palm-leaf screens there was a little circle of smooth baked clay about six feet in diameter. In the middle a small, baked, miniature volcano, hand-made. In the crater on the top was inserted a basin—so quaint!—made from the sheath of the blossom of the same everlastingly useful palm. As it held twice as much as the largest basin, it was just fine. One could get very clean with the aid of gymnastics, or an Indian lady who is doing nothing remarkable when she scrubs down one's back with a heap of raw but soft palm fiber.

I never do anything by halves. So, no one (of my own foolish race) being present, I twisted a fiber loin cloth around me and sallied forth. Bare feet and all. The village is all swept many times a day and everything burnt which is not quite "clean." When I became visible again a number of the men came up and we had a conversation as to things in general. They had seen me at work. I never saw them at theirs. We swapped tales and there was a lot of fun over that and Bush life in large and small. They are just man-sized children—had delightfully piquant ideas about the way I lived and found gold. So we talked on for a bit.

Then I saw a new game—surprises never lack. I had heard a lot about this sort of semi-wild people having a cure for snake-bite. I knew that this tribe must have one because I had seen them pick up snakes. Now I was very lucky and saw the whole process. The snake, a venomous one, had been killed, the head cut off and dried in the smoke of their fires. Quite crisp, it was pulverized in a mortar and the resulting dust had been put away until the time when some member of the tribe was to be "snaked-cutted"—inoculated. The victim was a mere youngster. I watched them make him

very drunk with palm-sap wine. When he no longer knew his own or any other person's name, his arm was bared and scraped with a piece of glass until there was a very considerable place where the skin was minus. On this a small quantity of the pulverized snake's head was rubbed. Then came the extraordinary part of the business. The unfortunate patient seemingly became fully convinced that there were thousands of snakes all about him—this not ten seconds after the poison had been rubbed on the wound. This was not faked. He suffered acutely.

This stage of the business went on for several hours when suddenly, comparatively speaking, he "recovered." When he did he was as sober as could be, apparently quite well again. To celebrate, one of the most venomous kinds was brought in and he picked it up in his hands. He had no fear. He was ready to have them bite as hard and often as they pleased. And as often I marveled that science should have gone so little beyond the wisdom of a people supposedly absolutely and barbarically ignorant.

The next morning I was off to inspect how the other work was progressing. It did not seem to be going so well as I should have liked

but with the knowledge that the dollies were making good I did not take this seriously. I found Frederick extremely discontented with Tom. He had asserted himself unduly and was trying to boss. Tom could shovel, but otherwise he was utterly incapable. Frederick reported that he was trying to stir up a "scrambolage." I took him out of the gang and told him to cut lumber. He was surly and I thought for a moment there would be an explosion. He was very powerful. My muscles tightened, but he thought better of it. The following Monday I let him go, and was a wee thing glad to see his back. As he went down the trail, Ban seconded this feeling. He turned to me with an air of profound solemnity.

"Och, sir, isn't it h——, sir, to think, sir, that the likes of that have the right to pay a head tax? Surinamers might be useful at odd times to pull through stopped-up drain pipes. But as Bush men, sir, you must see for yourself they are a disgrace."

"Ban, your prejudice makes you vicious," I said rebukingly. "And anyway who hired that man?"

Then I had to spend a week looking for Jeans, who got lost. He was nearly dead, poor devil,

The foreman—no one else would have the style to wear a cigarette behind his ear!—ordering a man out on the job. Slightly vexed!

when I located him. I walked over a hundred miles, ate very little, and slept in damp and hurriedly built, palm-roofed camps. Every evening the downpour! Which meant sleeping in wet clothes and wet hammocks, a very depressing and untidy job, very bad for me. The work particularly needed force behind it. I wanted a sinking fund sufficient to allow for Surinam specialties in the trouble line. I sent five pounds of gold to town, roughly worth fifteen hundred dollars, of which six hundred dollars was profit. Gold buyers had begun to pay six dollars an ounce less on account of the war. That does not sound much, but it was a deal when it came on the tip-top of the high prices one had to pay for men and food. The values were not evenly forthcoming. I had quite a family party of accounts that would stand a little paternal attention, yet I believed in the prospects and felt reasonably cheerful as to my financial present.

It was not the best time to be carted down to Paramaribo to spend five weeks in the hospital with the most awful malaria I ever had. Ban fussed over me like a hen with a duck chick. Dusty train for many hours, hot sun, and I arrived in town with an interesting go of fever.

was both the joke, the admiration and the chief difficulty of doctors and nurses, all of whom failed to exclude him more than temporarily from my room. He hung over me day after day, looking more and more as if he were trying to qualify for an undertaker's job.

I started to get better. Ban still looked glum. He did not improve. I could not make it out! He had seen me far worse in the Bush, without any of the care which I received in this place. I sent for my town agent to hear how the gold was coming down from the mine. He, my agent, arrived. He did not bring me bad news, but he looked worse than Ban. What the dickens was the matter with every one? I remembered with a start that my mascot-barometer tube of toothpaste was all gone!

I felt very stupid, cross with myself, cross with them, achieved generally a "kick-the-dog" state of mind. Only amused because illness had reduced me to "quite a slip of a girl," but with an abnormally enlarged liver! I called for the doctor. Demanded:

"When can I get out of here?"

"In a week."

No good to me. Not a bit. I had to go out

and boss my job. I might have no better luck than to get worse, but if I stopped in town a few days longer I should die of nervous bust-upness.

So when the doctor had gone I addressed myself briefly to Ban. "Pack. We go to the Bush tomorrow."

He got the doctor. He wept, nearly, but I was on the train at seven next morning, and six men carried me to the mine—hammocked me in. At the tree bridge I noticed sadly that my tree-pine-of-sorts had lost its bet with me. It had been stepped on.

When I reached the place I knew why that guardian angel of a black man had tried to make me stop in town longer, and why my agent might have been the keeper of a morgue.

Dick came to report. "The dolly work-place went on very well for a time. Then one day when we were all working like mad, sir, Mr. DeBrinnie appeared. He came up to me and spoke in a loud voice:

"'Boy, what are you doing on my property? This tunnel you're working is in ground over the line of your Chief's land, on mine that I'm working on royalty. You take your men and tools and get off.'

"I answered him, 'No, sir, I won't do anything like that. My Chief set me working here and he isn't here jus' now, but I'll work here till he comes back.'

"'You black rascal, you do what I tell you,' he roared at me. 'All the gold you have taken out already is mine. You put your things together and deliver me up all the ore you have on hand. Be quick about it, or I'll break your neck.'

"I looked at him good. He thought he was going to scare me, sir. I didn't know anything about the lines of the property. What he said might be so. But I did not intend to take orders from anybody but you. I told him so. Your instructions was that I was to get out this rock and crush it. When you came back I'd tell you and then he could settle direct with you.

"He got very angry. 'I'm not waiting to get my gold till your Scotch boss gets out of the hospital,' he shouted. 'You deliver me gold now, you Demerara cuttlefish.'

"Now I know my place. I generally respects myself too much to be disrespectful to a white man, sir. But I've heard considerable about this DeBrinnie and I know from the boys he

works that he's no gentleman. I don't know how he knew you were in the hospital, but, knowing that, he had come over and was trying to take possession.

"'I'm not going to deliver one ounce of gold to you,' I told him,—and I didn't call him, 'sir,' sir. 'I'm not going to move one inch. I advise you not to interfere. The men will stand by my orders.' I was mighty mad, sir, and he knew it. Then he very near marked himself for final settlement by beginning to abuse you, sir. He called you a thief and a scoundrel. All the men came crowding up around. They were just itching to lay hands on him—would, if I'd given the word, sir.

"I just walked up and shook my big fist under his long curling nose, sir. 'Stop,' I said. 'Another word about the Chief and I'll shoot you myself if I spend the rest of my life in the Penal Settlement for it.'

"We didn't make any nonsense, any of us. I expected trouble. But that DeBrinnie, excuse me, sir, is just a bluffer. He just said:

"'Oh, well, boys, if you feel that way about it never mind. Of course the property's mine, but a little ore more or less doesn't much matter right now. I'll come over and see your

boss when I get the time again. Goodby."
And he started off. The boys wanted to pot him just the same. I would have if he had ever poked his inquisitive nose round there again, but we didn't see him after that."

Dick was white-souled if black-skinned. I could just see DeBrinnie quail as Dick's monumental, rageful fist went under his nose. Of course it had made Dick the hero of the gang. Even Frederick, who had vied with him till now for leadership, gave him unquestioned respect.

I was distinctly unhappy about the real facts. I did not know myself whose property I was on. Although a mining person is supposed to put his budding conscience into pickle early in life, mine was still a trifle fresh. A mere matter of boundary line where boundary lines are usually indeterminate does not usually trouble a gold cruiser's slumber. This case was different. Judging roughly, I had a growing suspicion that this time I surely was on DeBrinnie's land. Of course I didn't know, but I had something near a hunch that if a boundary line were ever really measured there or thereabouts, it might be necessary for me to go to law with the owner of the concession they worked on if not with them personally. A real Bush pirate

would have adopted a semi-primitive method of settling such a dispute. It is wonderful how an ax or a rifle or even a mere cutlass will show a surveyor the error in his compass. But I am a perfectly peaceful person. That is, if people will just let me have my own way no trouble will arise as regards whiskey-soda or cigars! I proposed to settle up even on the basis of the facts as soon as I could get at them. But Dick continued his story:

"I'm sorry to say, sir, that the tunnel wasn't so good as we thought it might be. It played out just four days after that. The values decreased so it didn't pay and then we ran at a total loss. I'm afraid you're in debt, sir. We prospected hard all round to find payable gold. I tried faithfully, sir. I couldn't get on to anything. To make it worse the gold stopped coming from the other points."

"The ravine?" I asked.

"Not a grain since the fifteenth, three weeks, sir," he reported gloomily.

Day by day my liabilities had stacked up and all the profits I made had disappeared under a large wage account and bills for supplies. I was caught in a rather bad corner. The combination made me "fed up." My income had

vanished, my best prospects ditto. I sat out on my balcony and thought it over. Disgustedly I consigned the whole tale of Garlic Jones and his vast find to the realm of "Never-was." What an irony to found a Home for Inveterate Miners! He probably robbed banks to get his money and cooked up the gold mine story for general circulation. The truest expression I know is, "There is always some unforeseen disaster awaiting the gold miner!"

I deliberately checked my bitterness. My acidity passed. I argued more calmly. I recalled the general richness of the land. Faith returned. Granted that Garlic's tunnel was a pure joke, I still had the unutterable weakness persistently to believe in his sources. Should I now give up the idea of finding them? I debated. I hated like a bulldog to give up. I still had a fair credit. I would go on as long as ever I could, and see what was to be done about it. Even without the gold I might be on the verge of discovering the richest experiences that the Blessed Bush has to give. I knew that when I was alone I managed to laugh lots; sincere laughter itself is rich treasure. No phase of the life game is ultimate, however absorbing each part in passing—it

lasts but a short time and the only way to lump it is to see the funny side of everything. Even being hard up. I would send a special messenger for more toothpaste. I had got that far when——

"Dinner is ready, sir," announced Ban. So —a good dinner? Pea soup, roasted and stuffed Bush-pheasant, baked sweet potatoes, French beans, delicious tipsy cake, *lots,* two deviled cream crackers and black coffee. To drink, fresh lime juice and soda. Not bad for Bush housekeeping? Ban's wife, a dear, very ugly but delightfully devoted to us both, taught him all sorts of delectable dishes to cook for his master in the wilds. She visited wrath upon him if he did my washing carelessly. Now she had obeyed Ban's behest and gone back to Barbados, where she would be safely established until the gods of finance should smile on us again.

I returned to my balcony to consider my state. Many of my friends were bristling with bag-pipes and Union Jacks. I did not believe in war. Besides, nothing could bore me more than b.-p. and U. J. Old General Von Trota, who was killed in the early days of the war, a violent German, was a very intimate friend

of mine in Damaraland—a good personality wasted. The unspoken-of side of me was all on edge with the whirls of hatred and nastiness in general that encompassed the world. It hurts the psychic "me," so much hatred embitters the farthest space. Poor old Saint Peter! He must be all in, having a job which calls for so much overtime, with never a second to play his bally trumpet! Looking at affairs as a professing Christian should, it would seem that we are almost outdoing the "scum mob" at a prize-fight. God, it would seem, must have some very complete plans in the back of his head to allow it to take place. The prayers for peace or victory in the Episcopal service came to my mind. Whence have people's reasoning powers departed? The dishonesty of saying "We are Christians," and then—makes me ashamed. People dying is nothing. We all do it—some realize how many times and think less of the job. When saying the burial service, "Dust to dust," not one person in a million realizes all that was meant when that was written. God be praised, thought I, that I can avoid not the going-dead part but close contact with most people suffering from hatreds, negation of God.

So no matter what I faced I was content. To

be alone once more, to enjoy and have time to appreciate the splendor of the sun setting through vine-covered trees, to listen to whirring birds and skulking beasts getting ready for bed, to crane one's neck and see a pair of gorgeous macaws flashing blue, red and gold flame in the sun to their roosting tree, to dwell in the midst of that miracle of nature called Bush—I know few to whom this would be true food for the heart. For me more than serenity was there; these marvels emotionally stimulated me.

My clock ticked, the frogs croaked, the crickets chirped; there were no brazen noises. Bush noises blend artistically, never clash. All was quiet and clean. I felt miles stronger. With the real me all things were, as at all times, entirely satisfactory. The older I grow, the more I respect natural things, trees, hills, rivers. They arrive, they live out their lives, they pass. "God bless you all, my friends. Good-night," I told them, and went tranquilly to bed.

XI

NEW CAMPS: A BUSH PALACE

WAS I Bush-wise or Bush-foolish to stick it out? I did not know. Something had to be done at once. Three minor work places were at least not exhausted even if they were not doing well. These might pick up—and as soon as I was able to prospect again I would doubtless locate some new leads. A bit of luck occurred. Frederick, with beaming face and a gleam of "watch-me" satisfaction deep in his eyes, came to tell me in Dick's presence of a fine new prospect he had located. In a few days we were paying expenses and I was stronger.

Then a surprising thing occurred, an answer, apparently, to my self-querying. The agent of the mysterious D. J. Granville wrote me from London—not Trinidad—that I could have the five thousand acres I so badly wanted, additional to the fifteen thousand I was already working, on a two years' lease at a most reasonable figure. He did not mention DeBrinnie. By the same mail came a letter from my agent

who was frightened to find that I had come back to the Bush, warning me that DeBrinnie when slightly "tanked" had bragged that he had made me think he had the property, because through some subterranean source of information he found out that I was after the piece. He was claiming it by the right of Bush piracy alone, but he intended to have it legally. Subterranean sources? In all frontier mining towns there may be a man in your employ who is subsidized by an old master: an agent's clerk who is talkative, or a woman friend of the agent who knows all his affairs; the post may betray you—one has to guard one's actions carefully lest everything be known. My agent thought that by now he might have got it —that he had probably written to secure it. Happily with the other letter in my hand I was able to judge the case.

I knew I could make that graceless pirate walk the plank. He had deliberately lied to me. He had tried to frustrate me. He had endeavored to take advantage of me in my illness. Not a bold Bush pirate but a skulking squatter! As soon as I had time I would settle him. My chief concern had been about his having title to the D. J. Granville piece; but if

that he would lie about the tunnel being on his property. I heard, however, that he had gone to town, leaving his wife to hold the fort. I do not make war on women. I waited.

The royalty arrangement which gave me a right to work this new property was the silver lining of the black economic cloud which had settled over my gold-making operations. My spirits went up. I had a new instrument with which to try for the sources of that wealth by which old Garlic Jones and his contemporaries had made their immense fortune. The valley of a small creek on the new property showed itself at every point nicely gilded. I started to work at once and, reviving still further, went everlasting far for a sick man, searching for good spots. I was lucky. Skirting the mountains I located various camps. The first I called Cumboe Palm Crossing because of a magnificent specimen of this palm which sentineled the spot where my sluice had to go. I kept my Dutch lumps bestirring themselves until this was in. Splendid gold showed here. The first wash-up gave a profit of sixty-four dollars in one day with only six men to procure it.

Would it last? I did not worry, but went on. Of course it was just my luck continually to come across old tunnels after that. They are to be found quite frequently in this section and they never lost their fascination for me. There is scarcely anything more challenging to the average person than a hole in a hill, be it tunnel or mere excavation. Some atavistic, evolutionary instinct urges that one go look, enter, prowl. Several times walking up a creek-bed I discovered old tunnel mouths, thorn-and-ant, bat-and-snake infested. Myriad spiders keep their dainty webs a-tremble, dancing, dancing, dancing.

Sometimes I fired my gun into such a place and went in with quickened heart-beat. But after this I never took much stock in there being gold there. I had resolved not to bother about Garlic Jones' tradition. Still, when I emerged with nothing to show, I would bustle madly off up the creek, somewhat disgusted, very busy. I pretended I never did mean to go in there at all. Who would take that place seriously? That was just a look-in-for-fun. Of course. Damn Garlic Jones. What I was really looking for was——? And then I would settle on something new.

The tedious dry season arrived. In the state of my resources I could not afford to go to Paramaribo to stay until the rains should make work profitable. I remained in the Bush to prospect. When the second big wet season opened I was ready. There was Maupe Camp, where water had to be brought some distance to a Tom. The men worked here under wild plum-trees, very lovely, under which one everlastingly finds "morocoi," a slow-walking kind of turtle. They are not a bad asset to a camp, since the meat, removed from the shell and washed in lime or lemon water with a little salt, is very good either in the form of steaks or a stew. It is easily killed and takes the same position in the tropics to the gold prospector as the porcupine does in Northern Alaska.

Up the same creek I found the next Tom place, near Bullet-Tree Pass, where numerous balata or "bullet" trees were to be found. As I was walking up the bed of the creek on my way to discover it, the water was running noisily. We rounded a corner and came on a pool. I was startled by a great tidal wave. Three huge, blacky-gray beasts, most odd-looking, burst out of the water and made for the dense bush; before they got clear in they turned around to

have a good look at me, to see what sort of animal or person was on the prowl in hours when all creatures should be sleeping or at least roosting! Water-buffles or tapirs! The big tame things lie most of the time in the deep shady pools of unfrequented rivers, sometimes in old gold-prospecting holes, practically invisible since they show only the tips of their very "young" trunks. Their main object in life seems to be to try to get rid of the huge ticks which breed and fatten on them. In the dry season one risks a good deal walking on a trail by a creek because of the ticks which are shaken off the leaves in passing.

At this same place another day I lay on the top of a high river bank, and watched young fish try to pick off big fat raspberry-shaped and colored ticks encrusting the poor beasts' bodies. The baby tapirs are very pretty, spotted and striped. I caught one, took it home, and easily tamed it, but as he drank a dozen tins of condensed milk a day he became a bit expensive. Their meat is just eatable, rather soft and very dark in color. Indians love it, and where there are lots of Indians there are very few buffles.

I prospected over the flat-topped hills. Upon their uplands one finds small two-inch-wide

burrows about ten inches deep. In each generally could be found the tenant, one man-sized saucer-circumferenced, bilious-yellow tarantula. I can't say that I am passionately fond of any kind of spiders. They all have too many legs and these legs move too promiscuously to be entirely to my liking. Whenever one came to a smooth-surfaced red clay hill, one sat down with caution and fell down with dread! They could jump like dogs, and bite like cats—of course *very* little dogs and very little cats—and when they did it was about the same as a scratch from a bad snake. One went and made untidy noises and felt even worse than one sounded! It was a wonder to me that my men, with no boots on, did not get bitten more often. As it was they were caught frequently. By collecting tarantula heads, drying them in the smoke of the camp fire, then pulverizing and eating the resulting powder with butter and red pepper, the bite loses effect. I have had the courage to have one dose *mixed* for me, but did not take it, as it really did not look very appetizing. I could not forget when my men "did the cure" that they were dreadfully unwell out loud after taking the "spider" pill.

By ear and eye beguiling sensations I came

to find another camp both pleasing and promising. On one of these hills I was overwhelmed by an odor as though a drug store had gone through an earthquake and all the bottles of scent had been popped. The ground was littered with big pods which have little tonca beans inside. From some the contents had vanished and the ground about exuded "smell-well." "Coni-coni," or rabbits were thick thereabouts, waiting with impatient greed until we should leave and they could get their dinners. These beans, unfit for human consumption, because they taste too much of perfume, they love. Not to make them late for their meal we went ahead until we beheld green and red Surinam mountain palms, like Fourth of July waterfalls for color. The under sides of their leaves are a twinkling, crystalline gray; burnished burnt sienna middle-bits, curlycues of silver olive-gray shades underneath. My gold working was alongside and I named it "Klutch" Creek, because of the scarlet passion flowers hanging over the ravine bed; scarlet like the garment worn by the Indian squaws or "klutches" on the Pacific, waiting like Indian women in black corners, retiring but obtrusive. Those passion blossoms hang by nothing, suspended by stems

so threadlike and unnoticeable in comparison to the dazzling bloom that they seem to have exploded in midair. Upon this creek also whirls and spirals of Queen of the Night cactus, wonderfully scented, flowered serenely. Without the aid of a press agent. In New York or London their rare blossoming is proclaimed in all the papers.

My best new sluice place would, I thought, probably be at Tree-Fern Arbor. As at all the sluice places, a dam must be installed. The work loomed large in front of me. I could not begin here without more labor. For the present I had to treat Tree-Fern Arbor as my garden.

To the ignorant, tree ferns are not particularly wonderful. To the initiated they are of the rarest and loveliest things in the whole forest, delicate, unearthly. Their gloriously graceful habit of growth would make them most desirable people to have about in any case, but it is their generous dispositions which render them completely fascinating. Without feeling of sacrilege man prowls into the exquisite Bush, hacks down all the vegetation enfringing a beautiful clear water creek because it interferes with his getting at the gold-containing gravel

The sluice line, with a large crew.

and sand. Having worked out the creek and left a crude-looking gash he abandons the spot.

Then without fail the tree ferns spring to the rescue, and recompense for what has been destroyed. Out of a cushion of black fiber rootlets towers a stem covered with golden-brown, soft, silky hair, and to crown this ten to fifteen great fronds emerge in a fine spread, often reaching well above a man's head, the midrib of each six-foot-long frond gleaming like red lacquer. Every conceivable shimmering shade of green is found in the rich coloration of their lacy network. Haphazardly arriving, they always seem cleverly "placed." Rather like fine humans, these ferns, trying to heal scars caused by the gouging of the gold-greedy. And their inevitable appearance! They are so never failing, so competent at their Red Cross work, so loyal—looking upon them gave me renewed sense of the brotherhood of the worthy, and eased me greatly. My arbor was brave with an army of ferns. All around wild jasmines blew their long, long trumpets. Yellow, mauve-white and sheer white like catura orchids, most strongly scented of any flower in the world, the jasmines invite humming birds to hang

their nests from them. Nice girls, the jasmines! They love to live over very dark pools where they can smile sweetly at their own reflections, and when humming birds come to their cold lips they bubble with virginal laughter.

Near Tree-Fern one of my best men failed to look before putting his foot down and fell victim to a bushmaster, one of the few snakes extant which can strike either forward or backward. One of the deadliest of South American reptiles, he will attack a man, did in this instance. The poor fellow suffered a lot before we could get him down to the hospital. I had an anti-snakebite outfit which saved his life but did not make him suffer less. We had to carry him to the station. There was no train for twenty-four hours after he got that far. I was glad beyond measure to see him comfortably in a hospital bed.

While I was down I went to the Government Labor office for more men. Thirty I had to have at once. There were only a limited number of Island men to be had. A good many were in the balata country. The rest had to be Surinamers. Old Tom came up to me and applied. I looked him in the eye. I mentioned

to him the causes of our previous disagreement. I told him I did not think he deserved re-employment.

"I'll work hard, Boss. I'll put my neck on the block, sir, that you won't have nothing to complain of. I'se hungry, Chief."

I took him on, although Ban protested vehemently that Tom was too obstinate to be made to work. I argued with him a little contentiously because I suspected he was right. Tom was not strictly amenable to suggestion. But he was hungry, which always makes one weak. Ban became very dignified and served notice on me.

"I was brought up to drive mules. I was butler to the Governor of a British colony. But I'll have nothing to do, sir, with any Surinam niggers!"

Mules were the positive degree, governors comparative, and Tom superlative! But in spite of his protest Tom accompanied us back to the Bush as soon as the extremely irritating delays at the Labor office were at an end.

Then I began to force work prodigiously. At each camp I installed a black foreman who had to make good or go. There were Saturday nights when bad-making foremen went like

rockets fired miscellaneously. I had to visit all the widely separated camps as often as possible. Each morning, well ballasted with breakfast—none being more pleasing to my taste than Ban's Yarmouth bloater and coffee—I went to one or the other.

The next phase of my life consisted in getting up at five, out to boss work by six, back to lunch at twelve, out in another direction in the afternoon, and home too tired to see straight. Although I did not labor manually, the job of running a business which required from twenty to eighty men demanded on a sample day at the house, which I called a huge rest, that I go over three accounts, boss the issuing and departure of five hundred dollars' worth of salt pork, beans, rice, split peas, corn meal, flour and black tobacco. Then I wrote seventeen letters, all fussy, dull business ones. Also I sacked and paid off eighteen useless "boys" and, as I started on the next job, was interrupted by engaging new ones who evolved out of the Bush in the most mysterious way. Looking over unknown ground was the worst, taking time, requiring much care to keep the men full of food and well, and calculating shrewdly what would pay to develop and what would not. But

I like bits of it and so I am not fit for any other job.

I was away from my comfortable house at Anticipation most nights. I devised a portable palace. At dark I frequently found myself surrounded thus: a ten-foot river bank (moat with no drawbridge); decoratively lovely tree-ferns, flowering creepers and over-ripe vegetation (gardens on southern terraces); flat high hills all around (like forts planned by God); a nearly open clearing about fifty feet square (formal approach). Then my palace proper. It was stuck up on rough posts in the mud, had a tarpaulin roof, preferable to palm thatch because in the latter one is apt to get centipedes, and although it is only when it is rainy or windy that they get blown down, their footprints on the skin leave a sort of burning rash. My castle walls were plaited palm leaves. Palace floor, mud!

My bed was most dodgefully planned to beat beasts and insects, ten feet long by four feet six inches wide, canvas with brass eyelets along the edge. It weighed only twelve pounds and to set it up, which took but a few minutes, one cut forked sticks, laid poles upon them, side ones in forks and end ones on the outside forks.

Strong rope was wound around the poles and pulled taut through the eyelets. Then there I was! Add a mosquito net, not for B'rer Skeeter, as he is scarcely ever seen in that region, but to keep vampire bats away. Even ordinary bats make it necessary to keep one's feet covered and burn a light all night, otherwise they promptly bite. There is another sort said to bite the jugular vein and end one's story, so one need feel no shame if one is creepy when they are about. Inside my defended Bush-tent-castle I had sometimes a table. Hanging from the side poles as container for odds and ends were some very young hammocks. A very good lamp hung from any of a dozen hooks in the top of the huge mosquito net to illuminate my royal bedroom, which was completed by four pillows and two camel's hair blankets. Not bad? Very dignifiedly set up high because of such marvelous marauders as army ants.

These ants effect little harm, often good, as they clean out and clear out everything from snakes to centipedes. All that sort of growly-wowly beast simply fly when they start arriving. One can hear them rustling the leaves and making quite a noise as they come. But

also they clear you out in double quick time unless you are in a hanging cot or hammock whose ropes are soaked in kerosene. One morning I was kept in bed by them six hours. They come thick, covering the ground and even piled up on top of one another. At night they swarm together, deep as grains of rice in a bag, in hollow trees or caves or burrows. Like a mysterious conquesting army they move off some time after daylight, really rather splendidly, a sight once seen never forgotten.

If I was well fixed at nights, so at least was Ban. He was happy because he had organized an unending supply of sugar-cane. This was one of his Barbadian peculiarities, his mania for sugar-cane, and he had deftly arranged with Bush negroes of similar tendencies so that a supply was always on hand. How many weary times I tried to dissuade him from the practice! The results were always disastrous. You see, his teeth were already worn to stumps by this succulent dissipation. His invariable answer to my remonstrance that he was certain to have an awful toothache was always merely an extra wide grin and the reply:

"It is just possible, sir, but excuse me, sir, I think it will be worth it." Then he would

trudge along chewing cane the rest of the day. Resultantly I would spend part of the night hypnotized by his gargoylish expressions as seen in the dim light of a flickering lantern, while he gouged frantically trying to pry loose tooth-stumps with an extra long and distinctly rusty old French nail. Even these agonizing proceedings seemed to have no effect upon his consumption of cane the next day and the state of his temper couldn't have been better.

I had the satisfaction of watching the gold come in, although we shifted a lot of non-productive ground in order to get at high grades beyond. I checked up work. When things were going well I could tell it before I got into a camp because when the men are cheerful, as they always are when they catch sight of the glitter of a few grains of gold, one can hear one's "Tom-crew" as one comes out of the Bush long before one can see it. The hoe men have gold songs like sailors' chanties or Louisianian or French Canadian woodcutters' fragmentary melodies. The various songs have different rhythms and each one has its own especial expert hoe motions. The gravel is quaintly juggled as it is thrown high in the air, and a rattle in time with the song is pro-

duced by trickily manipulating the coarse gravel against the iron plate. Approaching the work spot one has positive symptoms of prosperity or poverty. If poverty were impending I would possibly boss the resetting of boxes, shift men or have a sort of shelter fixed for me above them from which I could growl effectively or pounce down and give a lift with an exceptional boulder—put pace into them for a while at least.

Where the railroad deflected from my property, the big river took a hand in my operations. I went by boat five days to pass the nine camps I had installed. It took me six days to walk from one end of the property to the other in a straight line, not like the railroad and river. The weeks ran into months. To my immense satisfaction, the gold even topped my expectations. A grim quality permeated my pleasure. My mind became edged with a more positive gold lust than I had ever allowed to possess it. I suspect I became somewhat hectic with this last streak of success. The time was ripe! I would open up wide and run every point full blast. I was extremely sorry at this juncture to lose Jeans, who was a valuable man and who regarded me as savior since the time

he was lost in the Bush. But a man in Paramaribo who had long promised to grubstake him now actually did so, and he had a place picked to work on royalty already. I was ready for more workers.

I plunged on labor. From the Government Labor office I ordered fifty men. I wanted them instanter.

"I assure you, sir, that we will put all you contract on tonight's train," the head of the Bureau promised.

I smiled impatiently. Two days later, late in the afternoon, forty odd arrived! Eight had deserted and were still uncaught. Eight men in a big sluice crew. This left me short one. Keen on sluice lines and getting immediate results, and obliged to sign up new men before the Bureau's head, I raged properly. I called him an underhung Dutch worm. Then I changed my mind and called him an overhung Dutch worm. "Why and wherefore were Dutch people invented?" I groaned.

But meanwhile the forty had to be set to work. Part went up the line, part stayed and chattered beneath my room while I oversaw the commissary department and wondered bad-temperedly why split peas and brown beans

were ever invented. At daybreak the following morning I went to the camp up the line to shuffle the new men properly, a fussy job. By the end of the week I had a double checking system of work going, an extraordinary innovation to the laborers.

Some days the results looked immense. My eight overdue men arrived and the same train on its return trip carried five fat pounds' weight of gold down to town. I even considered getting forty more men. My account book discouraged me. My responsibilities would have been cursable had I not been confident that the gold was there. I was already carrying a big proposition. The long period without production, the large expense for new tools, the never-to-be-concluded food and labor bills, the deducted royalties and the lowered price of gold made the game highly precarious. Yet, with the eighty odd men I had, the ability to work unremittingly once more and with the reassuring sight of gold coming in, I went joyously ahead.

XII

A BUSH NIGGER BATH AND BUSTED NEIGHBORS

As it happened I did not see DeBrinnie when he came back from town because I was off in the Bush. I went twice to find him but was met by Mrs. DeBrinnie who told me the first time that he was asleep after a bad "go" of fever, and the second time that he had gone back to town to get help from the doctor because there seemed to be serious other complications. So I deferred my contemplated discussion with him about the property until he should be able to meet me face to face. Mrs. DeBrinnie's manner was distinctly intended to be ingratiating, pacificatory. She was undoubtedly worried, looked thin and seemed less fatheaded than usual. I didn't like to ask questions, naturally, and some feminine streak in me, perhaps left over from some former existence, made me feel reluctant sympathy for this unappealing and spiritually untidy person.

It was a relief to turn to the business of mak-

The Bush nigger dugout or corial, always managed with superlative skill, glides inquisitively into view.

The "flowing road" to gold.

ing arrangements with four tributers or "pork-knockers" who were waiting to see me on one corner of the property. I had to settle where they were to work, and terms: fifteen per cent royalty from all but one, who had to collect from the others and therefore paid but seven per cent. Taking Ban, I went over with them toward the big river. We did not take my portable palace along. We decided after we had accomplished our errand to get a corial and go down the river a bit to a Bush nigger village and get shelter for the night. This we did, finding a boy of ten with a wonderful dugout with which we ran through the worst of all the rapids. A tiny, puny mite, he managed to steer our heavy corial right down the falls without even scraping a rock. Poor little half-starved devil! He looked as if he had been almost beaten to death instead of being fed.

He swung into a little affluent and with a slender sinewy arm and paddle-blade parted some vines. I sat up straight to enjoy its rare beauty. We were in a delightful little creek named, I found afterwards, *Unerwartet,* or Unexpected. It was all overhung with orchid-supporting trees, great vine-ropes intertwined and binding the whole together so that when

one tree died it did not fall. As it disintegrated, via ants and unnamed insects, it found lodgings on more fortunate lifeful trees. We passed round a bend and came upon rows and rows of corials, all sizes and shapes, each with its owner's "Gaddo's crest" carved in the stern seat. Nearly-solemn, round-eyed babies silently amused themselves seeing who could get the wettest. We emerged out of the gloom of our tree tunnel into the twilight where my white skin became visible. A gurgle of diving humans, a rustle of the Bush and we were alone. To eliminate their persons from land or waterscape is Bush people's long suit.

We had enjoyed water-waying, but we were empty and stiff when we hobbled out at the landing. It was twilight. We held a whispered consultation—one does not make a noise in the hearing of primitives at this hour. I understood it was excessively bad Bush manners. To insure me respectful reception and service, Ban informed me he had very good plans for entry into "the country." I did not anticipate the notoriety he brought upon me, however.

We started off, Ban leading with the "warchest" on his back. I followed close with my

famous brew of "backera dressy," in an oversized bottle. Bush niggers always need medicine and love it dearly. I carried common remedies. Some hundred yards or five minutes behind came our guide. We were soon through the crumb-sweeper gate of the village. Passing several apparently deserted but whisperful houses, I saw the "Granman" just ahead. Of course he was stiffly looking the other way. It is rude to be either curious or afraid, both in Bush wisdom meaning about the same thing.

Ban, taki-taki expert, opened the palaver with the customary "Waki, Theo?" It would seem a trifle disrespectful in civilization for a new-comer to ask at six-something P. M., "Are you awake, friend?" Still, if one wants to be distinctly *au fait,* this is the proper salutation. Five minutes of weather news, five minutes of crop reports, three minutes of politeness and a flash represented the time it took to rent two "modern and convenient gentlemen's residences" each with light and attendance at twenty cents a night.

As per usual, the Granman or Chief was very unwell with "chills." By instinct I flourished the all-the-time visible bottle. Ban surprised me giving me a mile and a half praiseful

song and dance as a doctor of pre-eminent note. This was his dodge! Suggestion was unnecessary. Everybody looked at me thirstily and I "poured tea." Half a tumbler of raw rum in a calabash plus exceeding-bitter quassia bark extract would cure most any white man hereabouts of any ailment. Not so these people. It merely begins to revive them. They sit up and gasp. They own up to feeling slightly better. Do we think a little more would be good for them? No, not at this time.

But Ban did not approve and so quietly took the reins. In our baggage in our boat we have stronger than this. "He," Ban says to the Granman, "he"—he waved in my direction—"is a big man and so must have the most powerful on tap." Instantly people evolve. Dozens. All hands, headed by Ban, departed at double forte for the landing. Even the lost-to-sight babies.

The baggage was not large in this instance, and it was unpacked amidst the utmost curiosity and considerable nerveful timidity. When my "Billy" which Ban always carries was on the point of boiling on the fire, the new cure-all bottle was found. Again, Ban's private brew, but surely stronger. The taste is really awful—Ban confided to me that it was purposely so to

made before town jokes are

Oh-oo de backera waki!"
ıwake? Oh, the white man
the first song one hears on
—the Bush nigger's good-
backera" and "waki," feel-
:ed, also being a man, "feed
order of the moment. The
)peared at my cot-side with
strong and delicious coffee.
ı having no walls, the show
untry" was concerned re-
fee. Swarms of very shiny
children peered at me with
absorbed my coffee. They
wo sides of the house where
:hed roof gave them just
he two ends the boldest of
r in to look on with interest
:nvy, their covetousness not
.l articles that one would
ould want, but for silly lit-
could not imagine any one
Clothes are uninteresting,
d butter tins are priceless
fortunate possessor. Ban,

ave arranged all that and that
›rder for your comfort, even
ıse you have trouble with a
ıem inquişitive niggers needs
, sir."
ukes, their depth and extent,
graded millimeter rule—he
a juke for such and such an
casionally has had "cook's
introduced as "My son, sir,
ıe to visit me a little piece."
is none of my affair. There
when Ban's helpers in the
he mantelpiece for a week.
d to spur them on, as it were.
city of cook's helpers at least
›ills. I never ask Ban ques-
›wn parental proclivities and
ılly useful in preventing or
guments" among the men.
structions now, duly grateful
xisted. I sallied forth armed
washables. I was escorted
ı trail by him. Swarms of
nced along beside me. Sud-
a bit rumpled in their minds.
›rt. I saw the reason—the

Then—well, the Bush niggers could not stand all of my white person on view without their having a good look at me. So they had taken another road where no obeah was to be found, had clambered into corials and were around me in swarms, laughing and making extremely personal remarks about all the visible me.

Now, to get ashore was easy. But to get at even a towel was a bashful job. What to do? Yell for Ban!

I yelled till I was tired. No result. Oh, very well! I was only an over-civilized person when all was said and done. Why should I not go ashore or anywhere else that I wanted to just as I was? I promptly did this. Huge added joy, violent chuckles, painfully impertinent remarks accompanied me to my bundle. There were my clothes, my cutlass and a bottle of very pink solution of a very strong disinfectant, mighty useful to keep one's feet free from "mud-itch."

I hesitated over the cutlass, remembering Ban's injunction. But I wanted a general clearing of the landscape. Obeah—anything may be obeah. So why not a bottle of pink disinfectant? I dressed myself liberally in a towel, collared the bottle, and making suggestively

obeahish movements, solemnly poured some of the liquid into the river with an apparent incantation. The Bush niggers nearest the forest dived in. The corials paddled in racing style in the opposite-to-me direction. Unfussed further with over-inquisitive people, I was left in solitary peace to dry, dress and return to camp. This handy obeah game helps one over a lot of steep places by the way, acting surely and invariably in tidying up an overcrowded spot!

As I dressed I enjoyed the bird life on the early morning river-banks. That hour may be the only time in the day one gets a chance of seeing it well, however hard one may look later, as the birds often have a tree-top program and then all one gets are their songs or faint calls. But in the morning they come to the riverside to attend to their getting-ready business. As always I did not tire of the wonderfully colored "Johnny-fishermen," kingfishers. So many varieties. Such colors and generally interesting manners! They are not to be passed by if one has an everlastingly hungry nature appetite. They are so busy in their swift flight—telegraph messenger birds.

Returning through rows and groups of doubt-

ing Bush niggers, I arrived at my hut. My Billy and frying-pan both spluttered fretfully at having been kept over the fire so long, but upon my appearance both were instantly made happy and so was I. Then, breakfast being a thing of the past, and the time being seven-thirty, it was judicious for us to move. The "rent" paid, I disbursed a swig or two of powerful "backera dressy," as an antidote to the obeah with which I had been compelled to overshadow the bath-room. Then we stepped into our corial and were silently paddled down the green tunnel out into the bright sunlight of the swirling river.

We went on to Tree-Fern Camp. We saw "Jeans" by chance on the way, and he reported that he had been getting good gold from the first day. I was heartily glad. Then I turned my attention to my own problem. Ban had been telling me for some time that on the new job started at Tree-Fern things were by no means going as they should. Old Tom was assigned to this work place and it seemed that, quite forgetting his promise to me, he had been stirring up discontent and soldiering on his job. When we arrived he certainly was doing nothing. It is a serious matter to get a waster

One of the best Bush nigger "county families," before a house decorated with characteristic cedar wood carvings.

or a drone in a busy hive. It corrupts the whole spirit of good work.

I directed Frederick to jack Tom up. Then I unobtrusively watched and waited. The foreman's forceful admonition had an effect, for exactly fifteen minutes. Then Tom lapsed again. It was up to me, unless I wanted to fire the foreman, and I couldn't spare him. I went over.

"Tom, you don't seem to be working."

Surly, he replied. "I sure is working."

"You haven't used your shovel for five minutes, Tom," I said sternly.

"I'm working hard as I am going to," he retorted, with a hard glitter in his wicked eye.

His manner was an insult. No white man can accept such insubordination for a moment. Dismissal is one course but one is a long way from more labor. Court procedure is next to impossible. I followed precedent. He went on his back. He was clearly in the wrong by the standards of the country. I did not expect him to give fight. But he was up and at me fiendishly on the instant. I had all I could do to defend myself. Frederick and other laborers, sensing that I did not want interference, did not

meddle in the job. I left him rather floppy on the ground.

"There's something really wrong with that nigger, sir," pronounced Ban with conviction. "When a man's more obstinate than a mule *and* more stubborn than a governor, take my word for it he's only fit to kill."

Personally I was quite at a loss to understand Tom's attitude. I had taken him back, believing in his need, upon his serious promise to cause no trouble, quite against Ban's advice as well as my own judgment. I dismissed it as a sheer case of ingratitude, resolving to let him go just as soon as the rush was over.

But I was by no means through with old Tom, although I could not guess how tremendous a menace he was. All told that day I did a great walk and when I reached my "really" home at Anticipation that night, it seemed very grand indeed. I determined to stop in bed all day. But at seven-thirty my foreman arrived from the south end of the property with a lot to discuss. I was obliged to get up and talk to him. When we were about through he advised me that the DeBrinnies had capitulated without being stormed. They were deeply in debt and stony busted. They were coming

to see me—me, after what they had done. Help!

I reflected. The man was a plain scoundrel. While his wife was not much cleaner as far as I could see, she was pitiful. Some fit, some fail in the forest. These had always failed. They were, to be sure, Bush-foolish folk. They were now mere human discard in the busy Bush. They had put on great airs when they first arrived, I had been told, to impress all poor folks that they were quite unknowable. Still they were the sort of people who are mostly more and more broke and whom in the end we have to send out of the country. This explains what they are like.

I confess I used language as I dressed. They arrived. They wept. They made dull sniffy noises. I fed them. He was the under-dog; I was as magnanimous as possible, and made the best provision for them I could. I took over all their assets of furniture and tools, to be paid for when I cashed in for the season. I told them they could live in my dear comfy house at the railroad while I thought of something for them to do.

I *hate* strangers in my bed. But I gave it to them and set my most faithful Ban to look

after everything. He was very much loath from the first.

"Must I stay away from you, sir? I don't mind looking after your friends, but the Debris —or whatever their name is—dirty Debris is what they are, sir, if you'll please excuse me, sir, even if they are in hard luck, sir."

I scolded him a little, ordered him to stay and while he was about it to do me credit.

Parker, a friend up the line, was going to town next day and I sent Ban for him. We talked the situation over, had a laugh over Ban's apt name, Debris, and Parker promised to look up something for the man in Paramaribo. So I declined to worry. Naturally I did wish that financially still poor me did not have to support busted married couples. This particular job was most mind-depressing and degrading generally. That is the joy of being a "Christian!" These things make me hate the mining game; there is always some awful mess to be tidied up.

XIII

BUSH LUCK

I SHOULD hardly have tried to tidy my neighbors' affairs if I had understood the situation. Apparently they hoodooed me. Things began to go frightfully wrong. Gold behaves in a very foolish way. For a period one finds it steadily at a profit. All of a sudden, without rhyme or reason, it is no longer there. The night Mr. and Mrs. Debris came I weighed up fifty grams of good gold. Later, that seemed to me like the last gift from God for filling their tummies and putting a roof over them. After being used to a steady profit, losses stacked up so fast! The very first day after they arrived was too abominable to spill ink over. Cumboe Palm Crossing went back on me *in toto*. This was one of my chief earners. The next day started like a nightmare with bad reports from my other two good producing points.

I had been depending upon the sluices where the bulk of the men worked, and which must

produce if I were to keep up with labor costs. At noon one of my best foremen burst into the camp where I was temporarily busy. I had an exultant flash of excitement. I thought I had fallen an heir to Garlic's luck and that he had struck it very rich. So he had—only it was malaria, not gold. After a week I came in from the Bush to my big house wondering if I had been dreaming all this while, perhaps under the effect of some mental opium, that there was gold in any of these tracts. It had simply disappeared.

It was marvelous to feel dry and cleanish once more, but my protégés were still there. Parker had failed to illuminate the situation. I longed to look "widely" at people, but I, being very much I, cannot obliterate the "background" which is so uncomfortably clear and distinct to me, composed of insincerity, alcohol, messy morals (not merely immorality—that is comparatively a detail) and general human lustfulness. This background for me most times obliterates the "pictured persons." Don't imagine that I set myself up to be a real Christian or anything impossible like that! No. I have done, experimentally, various common and unusual things, but they

did not satisfy me a d—— bit. I am still undergoing mental disinfection. But my guests were not of my mind. Seeing too much or too little, my stray doggies were rather fearful. He sat right next my shoulder and wanted me to discuss war news and so on. She was using my beloved, clean and self-magnetized room. I would gladly give nine-tenths of all I own to "real people," but they chanced to be everything I dislike. I can do nothing in the way of self-expression when I am jammed up against people I feel at outs with. It makes me all rumpled on the inside of my mind. The thoughts that come to my dullish brain are raw-edged. Also my housekeeping, a joke when I am alone, suddenly became more complex. Running out of tea was a positive tragedy.

I went forth gloomily to my camps and drove on through another terrible week. Incredible! The same reports from all my foremen at once. *No gold in sight.* I couldn't sense it. Why? Everything else was wrong. Sickness among the men. Two lazy lumps deserted and, as I had to account to the Government for every man Jack, I had to take good time to locate them. If luck did not change I was in a very bad hole. A few more successful weeks and I

would at least be safe until the rainy season came again, even if my vision of finding Garlic Jones' great source had been utterly fantastic. I could feel then that I had not failed in this important account with my great creditor, the almighty Bush.

I went to Tree-Fern Arbor this week. Tom was there, and though his manner was by no means what I could wish, he took off his hat properly and Frederick reported that he was working better. I went to sleep there that night.

I had been in my hammock about an hour when I heard a frightful swish and the sharp heavy impact of a bludgeon-like thing against the wall. It did not fall. It stuck. It flashed through my mind, I don't know why, that it was the head of a pick-ax.

I slid quietly out of my hammock. Another missile hurtled through the air, this time falling exactly on the spot where I had been lying, cutting my hammock to ribbons. Frederick heard the weapon strike and, with the keen sense for danger which a foreman should have, came swiftly to the proper place.

I was out in the darkness by that time, going like liquid flame in the direction from which

the axheads had come. I was so prompt that I actually laid hands upon the offender. Tom! I knew by the build of his stocky body, although he writhed away from me in the velvet black of a starless night. I lost him entirely. The whole camp was up and searching, most of the men with angry growls and fiendish expressions boding ill to him. But they did not find him. The Bush sheltered him well. The incident made me incredibly blue. Affairs got worse instead of better so far as gold production was concerned. A blow now, and besides having no easy choice of ways to take out of my financial dilemma, I should look Bush-foolish.

The blow fell.

Several nights later I had somewhat more peacefully pitched my "palace" in a new place where pannings, made incidentally, showed well: the first encouragement of the frightful fortnight. I had had a long day. It had rained off and on. Walking was tiring. Camp seemed mighty good to me. It was not much of a camp at that. Too near the river-bank, too wet, too many snakes. Still, as it was for the time being home, I was very glad to arrive. I found Ban, who had come with a message to find me. As

usual he had heard me whistle while a long way off, so had tea awaiting me.

"How are things looking today, sir?—I am hoping the men have shown good minds with the work? What gold did you bring with you? How will the production be tomorrow in the sluice creek? Everything should be ready by now and then we will soon catch up."

"I have all the gold I own in my canister, Ban," I answered. "There is enough to pay the men. All the preparations are finished and the first ground to be worked here shows up very well indeed in the prospect pan."

Ban delivered his message. I told him not to go back until the following morning and to save his camp news until breakfast time. He wanted to talk about the DeBrinnies. He was still full of my encounter with Tom. His face clouded with disappointment for he dearly likes to gossip. He seemed on the point of protesting, but thought better of it when he saw my exceeding weariness. I was glad of his presence. In dry and comfortable clothes I dined well and largely. Hopefully I wrote up the day's doings and then I turned in, without forebodings.

There was a nice moon. Soft fluffy clouds puffed along across the sky. The Bush was

musical with string-like insect voices. An occasional call resembled an oboe or flute. Frogs were the horns of the orchestra. Tree frogs way up in the highest branches clarineted; below, huge bull-frogs blared brass trumpet fashion or boomed a full-toned deep bass. When the brass was going one had to talk loud to make oneself heard against the concert. I was rather near the back drop of the orchestra so the horns were my nearest neighbors. I had to get out of my hammock to go hunt a big fellow who did not intend to let me sleep. When he was still we had a choral number by my foremen, who crooned all sorts of weird melodies in tuneful voices and accompanied them with the cheerful throbbing of a rather well-played guitar. A vista showed me the shoulder of my pet mountain all be-moon-gleamed in the distance. Night birds called more frequently. It was not hot. No hint of danger. A light, fresh breeze ruffled the leaves.

I awoke at eleven, disquieted. Not late by town time, eleven o'clock is the very middle of the night in the Bush. A curious muffled roar filled the air, the roar of oncoming rain on tropical foliage, rain beating loudly on great leaves which spread themselves like tea-trays

breath of wind, nor a star. I woke Ban up. Obviously feeling cross he rolled out of his hammock. Then he realized that I was worried and at once faithfully became all attention.

We listened.

The roaring became a little more distinct. It seemed to approach from the high hill at the back of the camp toward my work places. I heard a sinister rumble. Then with great swishes, water fell on the tarpaulin roof of my house, increasing to such rain as I had never before seen and hope never again to see, a terrible prolonged gush. Following a distinct prompting I threw on my raincoat and went out to take bearings. Ban followed, coatless.

As we stood there trying to make out what was likely to happen, I became aware that the puddle in which I was standing was not a pool but moving water. Into camp! I turned up a lantern and realized how extremely fast we were being flooded out by the silent but swiftly rising creek. There was practically no fall in the water level at this camp ground. The main stream was overfull already. It refused to take the tributaries' burden. River and creek overflow had been instantaneous. The great volume

An impetuous jungle river which at times tears its way in flood to the sea.

of water gliding past looked more like oil than river-filling. Soon it was up to my ankles. It was mounting precipitately, an inch a minute, it seemed.

Grabbing what we could, we made for high ground. Very little we were able to take. In two trips we had collected a small pile of our most precious belongings. The water rose over the floor. The canister was too unwieldly to carry away in the darkness. To my utter horror the keys to it had fallen into the water off the table. They could not be found. I made a hazardous third trip and groped, almost maddened, for a long time in the rising flood. They eluded me. I had to give it up. I returned desperately to the others. All me and mine were wet and away. I made high ground in the nick of time. Then, all exposed out in the open, we and our few worldly goods came in for the full benefit of a continued deluge.

I faced my condition. It must be ruin for good and all this time! If we here, camped where there were mile-wide flats to be inundated before we felt the water, were flooded out, how were my people faring higher up this same river in the south where it flowed through confined valleys? Our important sluice creek was

the main water supply for this river. The men were living well up the hill beyond flood reach, but I knew that, half-maddened by responsibility for tools and sluice boxes at the working places, some of the devoted fellows would risk getting drowned to save anything they could. Saving property would be hopeless endeavor. I knew that bodily that rapacious torrent was sweeping all my mining fixings—*and my new tube of toothpaste too!*—out toward the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, not just a few tools and dams but all the dams. Every bally thing would go off down the creek, sluice boxes by the score, tools by hundreds. I could see that I would be left no chance to continue production except practically as a lone hand. For the moment I was too stunned to figure whether I could afford to do that. I think I am proud.

My head went down in my hands for a time. Then I started out from the slender shelter of the tree beneath which we were huddled into the wettest black that could have been conceived. I understood the flood of the Old Testament better. My heart went out to Noah. In the deluged dawn I dimly made out that all my camp was under water except the top of the

roof. The rain changed to a relatively mild downpour—not that the comparative wetness of one time or another bothers me. I have been wet so often. Even though being financially wiped out was a trifle perplexing, that too was not a new story. But I was wriggling mentally over the canister. If it were gone I would owe all my workmen for good honest service. I did not think I could stand that. Yet the canister could not have escaped.

Daylight came. The camp was completely submerged, the waters still rose. Even Ban showed fright. He apologized, with a grotesque seriousness, that he had forgotten to bring up a pot and some coffee. Curious how a calamity numbs the human mind so that trivial things stand out. Ban was slightly crazy. But I appreciated enormously his thinking of my comfort even if food was a disgusting idea.

Proof of my being out of the gold-mining business soon came along on the torrent, a water-gate from a spillway which had been installed eighteen feet above the high-water level of the creek. If this had gone my conjecturings were true. Everything was finished and I might as well get my mind straightened out.

"All right," I communed with myself, "I

guess God made another plan quickly, so did this to tidy me up. Perhaps I was too greedy. Sufficient unto the day, et cetera—Good idea? I will ultimately pay a hundred cents on the dollar with a possible cash balance of ten dollars over or thereabouts. With one cent over I can and will force myself to the top again. God, via mother, gave me fair advantages, honest blue eyes and some brains. While I wonder why and what He does a lot of things for—when I get my nose over the edge of a hill I am very gently pushed back. Still, I am used to climbing and will go on till I drop dead off the ladder. Then what? Anyway my curiosity will be satisfied even if I do involuntarily have to go into the brass band business!

The canister still possessed my mind. I tried to get down the far side of the mountain to look for it. Where ordinarily a dry gully was to be found stretched a great river in the flats beyond. I took another direction. Same thing. We were on an island. I returned to my pitiful little stack of worldly possessions. The men crouched all that day growling and wondering why these things happen. We slept bits that night but we were hungrily cold. Morning came. We were surprised to see that the

creek was way down. It had fallen until a few posts of our camp were to be seen, the waters dropping nearly as fast as they had risen.

At sunset I managed, by wading and swimming, to reach the old camp site. The roof and sides of the house were gone. The poles, a bare skeleton, had freakily withstood the flood, owing probably to the backwater from a very busy eddy just beyond. I prospected with my feet the spot where the canister had been. I groped in a circle. Not a sign. Wading very sadly and wearily out of the water in knee-deep mud, I caught sight of my emergency prospect bag caught on a post. I made for it and, hoisting it on my shoulders, headed for Ban. Matches in a water-tight case, canned food of several sorts, pots of meat extracts were therein. I was not one bit hungry. I was too stupidly and humanly worried for that, but when Ban handed me a tomato can full of strong meat extract I drank it down and felt a little better. Greatly pleased, he remarked with the first grin I had seen since we were inundated:

"Excuse me, sir, but you surely will have a fine time now making good still. You got some man-sized troubles now. This quiet life we

have been living is surely not too good for a person."

I don't often get a lump in my throat, but I am not ashamed to own up to a very large-sized one arriving there when Ban gave this brave twist to my unimaginable exigencies. I argued:

"But, Ban, what about the payroll? All I have in the world is in the gold can and it's gone with the rest of the stuff."

"Believe me, sir, forty-seven of the men working for you now are British subjects. You will have no trouble with the money."

He was right. Next day most of them came in a body to discover if I were alive. They reported their own terrific experiences. Everything was gone. We did not have even a gold pan in the outfit as they had left everything at the working places so as to get a good start in the morning. The rain seemed to have been general and the reports from places on other creeks were the same. We were not likely to work on an ambitious scale for a considerable time. The only cheerful thing which happened was that one of my foremen delivered two hundred dollars' worth of gold he had collected at a far-away camp and had not yet turned in.

I was down, busted, uncertain as to what to do. I put it up to the men there and then. Almost all of them said that I was not to bother about money that I owed to them. The ones who did not say this showed respect for the warning in the other fellows' eyes!

I sent them back to Anticipation but I would not return until I had searched a little further. They had brought food enough and we camped down as well as we could that night. The worst strain was over. Money does not really interest me one bit. I am quite contented for myself as long as I can remain in the Bush, at home, and am not obliged to fuss around strange humans too much. I still had confidence that I could make my living no matter what happened. Had it not been for the men's wages, I would have tried to feel that I should still be as happy as a monkey in an unwatched cocoa field. I was reflecting so when Dick suggested that we take a turn down the creek just to see what it looked like now.

The water had subsided. We climbed down where my old camp used to be. We began to pick up "loot," a pot here, a tin of something there. Beyond, at intervals, blankets, clothes and all sorts of odds and ends which could be

dried and used. Fine? At the first bend, a great tree with flanged roots projected into the creek-bed. As we were working our way over the submerged parts of this tree, we both whooped with delight. At the same instant we had seen my canister. It was wedged in between two of the roots like a nugget of gold caught in between two riffles. Instantly I became ten years younger. With all the men paid up my cares were far less acute. I could hardly wait to get out to the railroad to tell them that their money was safe and that they would be paid up in full. I had a fortune of ninety-one dollars left over. I was a millionaire! Of course my bills in town must wait a bit. But that is one of the reasons that one is charged so much by the town merchant. He must exact interest on all overdue bills and to save the trouble of collecting the money he charges it up in the first place. Feeling very prosperous I carried the good news home at my best speed. My first action on arriving was to arrange instantly to replace my shipwrecked mascot-tube of toothpaste.

XIV.

FAITH AND PHILOSOPHY

NEWS of the calamity flashed to town. The days after were very trying. Roundabout a hundred men flocked up with bills. I pacified them as best I could and arranged to send the laborers out of the Bush. But none of this fussed me up half as much as Ban. When I returned to my house, he reported:

"If you'll excuse me, sir, I couldn't tell you when you were worried, but them Debris people aren't all right, sir. I fix them a bath every day, sir. I tell them it's ready. They don't take it, sir. I ask them at what time they want it and they don't say nothing, sir. And they don't take it."

I sighed. These details were so trivial after what I had gone through. I had even almost forgotten about the attack on my life until he now in his continued rambling talk mentioned it, all excitement. He talked of Tom with a hobgoblinish expression, a glint in the eye, and suggestive brandishes of his cutlass. But I was

fearfully puzzled as to means of politely getting rid of Mr. and Mrs. Debris. They made no move to go. I could not afford to have guests. If I could have, they were seemingly more servile and insufferable than could be borne. Goodness only knows what would become of them! Yet presently I gave my mind to the problem. The "she trouble" went to town the following morning. He begged to be allowed to remain for a bit as they had no money.

In spite of Ban's dislike for the pair he behaved very oddly for a hardened sinner. He brought her things to the stop on the railroad, thinking out even all she would require on the cars. When he heard the train, however, he spoke to Dick hastily, and started toward the house.

"Why, Ban," I said, intercepting, "why aren't you waiting for the train?"

"Dick will do what is necessary, sir. Excuse me, sir, but I can't stay. It's too upsetting. I *never* go to *partings.*"

I stepped aside and did my duty faithfully as host, escorting DeBrinnie as cheerfully as possible back to the house. He hoped my prospects would revive and I would be able to pay

them as I had expected for their assets. He petitioned me to find him work so he could keep her in town in bread and butter. He clung to me abjectly, although I certainly must have looked like a bad bet. I resolved to endure him, although I was very tired of helping floppy people who did not wash. I was deeply depressed. I liked my mud puddles small; this was a swamp. Walking through mud and water depressions in the aftermath of calamitous experiences is not inspiriting?

I felt solitary. My ideal of God and I are on very simple and rational terms. I happened into this sphere with several kinks, God's business, the worst kink being my ability to be truly fond of companionship. Either sex. It had led me to many things, bumped me through trouble and at last taught me to pick my way carefully along the Road. Most men have failed me and yet I have comforted myself by binding up the feet of such lame ducks as limp my way. One hates to have this turn bitter too. It would be bitter if one were not determined not to permit it to be so. Sometimes in solitude I fall to asking Why? Today I searched the ever-claiming, unfathomable, repeatedly-defying but all-wise Bush to see if it

would yield me even a fragmentary, impartial answer.

In contrast to dependent DeBrinnies, my workmen were consoling and all of them had offered to stay by me, but even if I could have fed them I would not have accepted the sacrifice of half an army—but when the laborers were departing my four best boys, Dick, Frederick, little Christie and my faithful Ban, presented themselves.

Dick twisted his hat. "We just came to say, sir, that if you intend to stay in the Bush we stay too."

My throat felt thick. "But, boys, I can't afford to keep you."

"That doesn't matter, sir. We can do without money as long as you can, sir. Now when you're not very financial you need help to get more money, sir. We're not going back to town, Chief." The devotion of these honest fellows went very deep with me. I accepted their offer in the spirit in which it was made.

I particularly needed to be alone once more. I saw that queer lame duck to the train with something very like regret that I couldn't send him to town at least with money in his pocket. He told me he didn't have a cent.

The train left. I went back to the house to find Ban awaiting me in an obvious state of relief. A twinkle appeared in his eye. He knows me very well! He is fully aware that even without a suspected hoodoo the wrong person is extremely irksome.

"Well, sir, that is over. You sure cleaned up the Debris. If you will be so good as to go out in the garden for a bit I will scrub out the house, fix your bath and when we are both done you can put on clean clothes."

Now, although a garden is usually the spot closest to my heart, I had not fancied ours since the parasol ants had paid it a visit. But I was all too sure that Ban knew what would be most comfortable for me—he is an artist whose medium is comfort.

I went as per command. Oddly enough I found more comfort than ever Ban foresaw. The parasol ant is the one we dread. It enters a patch you have planted with especial care, cuts pieces the size of a dime out of flower and vegetable leaves, hoists them over its head like a sail with its two extra front feet and scampers away toward home. In some places there must be millions of them in the same nest.

They honeycomb the earth where they have

their burrows for as much as a hundred square yards, and from their camp grounds, by continually passing over the same paths for months at a time in hosts, they wear little roads with branches connecting which extend often about a hundred feet in all directions. Their road-making is very neat indeed. They always work at night. Of course the morning that we found that they had laid a path to our camp and removed a whole bag of rice, we did not think them half so admirable as we did the day before. We had been particularly disgruntled when they descended upon our vegetable garden just after it was nicely started and cut it all down. Every last leaf these little folk took!

But, thinking about it, I began to chuckle at the idea of those little vegetable miners making good and growing their families at the expense of a sleepy world. The main thing in their sphere was to acquire forehandedly. All those leaves are carried wisely to the mushroom-beds away down under the ground which make mold tó nourish the fungi on which, or on a parasite which feeds upon it, they feed their young. If somewhat annoying to live with, they at least know their trick superlatively.

cannot swim, sir. I'll go down any mine with you, for I know that in such places know what you are about. But, sir, before would allow myself to go into any of (subway) contraptions where you are only ing your fare and so are not boss of the well, sir—well, I should need an awful big sir, before I could stand it. But in my opinion I should do better, sir, if you would give your compass and the proper bearings of you are thinking of camping. I will then safer and surer of getting there, sir."

The picture of a rather short and ugly badian hiking through New York City between twenty-story office buildings and cloud-scraping apartments with his nose glued to a compass by which he expected to locate me and my camp was cheerful! He always great beguiled me.

Ban brought me my walking-stick, hat cutlass. Whimsically I asked:

"What next, Boss?" asked:

"Well, sir, I think you better go look at some parrots, sir. Young parrots are happening and you should go see about it. Perhaps you might

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y minutes' walk from this
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l around, very little Bush.
alm leaves put together so
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the dropping sun and the gorgeous going-home-to-bed macaws, which flitted with curious quick motion across the corner of the water nearest me, the old comforting wonder in the ample space, in the genius of beauty, the old lonely catch at the throat bred by the desire to share with one comprehending, but, most preciously, also a reinforced quiet belief in the balance of values. Marry Belief and Wonder and the child is Enchantment. As it grew dusk I found myself wondering scornfully, what is poverty? 'Surely no man could live among such sights and suffer it in his spirit.

Perfectly contented I dropped asleep. When I awoke the moon was full up, the silence absolute. I cannot tell you actually what I saw; to me they were doubtless visions of glamouring illusion, but how many times in one's life does one see glory—and what is reality? The picture, beyond words lovely; the only sound which broke, and that very faint, was the wind rustling the dry palm leaves. I changed my head to the fore-corners of the hammock and saw the morning splendors of color and motion. The sun rose and I had to become a mere gold-scratching man again. What a fall? In some ways I am a misfit. I wonder why I was not

made a painting person. Still, it would be an impertinence for a mere human to try to paint what one sees from places like that. From my cabin at Cape Commeral, in Vancouver, I saw the same sort of complete nature picture, only there it was a pine atmosphere; the Olympic mountains were glorious. If the Greater South, with its own satisfying specialties, incomparable spectacles of Bush and savannas, brought me only the same indifferent success attended by my gold cruises elsewhere I should still have rich pictures, brave memories, fine illusions, joyous diversions to carry me forward through experiences which test one's mettle.

XV

I PICK UP THE LOST TRAIL

BLUE sobs, when busted, never form a ladder to climb out of one's troubles on. Again I took stock of my possessions. Sickeningly few. I was bound to start out prospecting again. I was by no means low-spirited, but my courage was braced considerably by a note I received from Jeans, tales of whose persistent good luck had followed me for several months. He sent it by one of the boys.

"DEAR CHIEF,

"I hear you are in bad luck just now. I would like for you to come up and take my workplace. I can find another.

"Respectfully,

"JEANS."

I was remarkably stirred by his unselfishness, proof of the gratitude he had repeatedly professed for finding him when he was lost. But I was even more keyed to optimism by his quiet, "I can find another." If he could, I could. I sent him my warm thanks and refusal

with appreciation that in his springing to my assistance, and his willingness to give me his own find and hazard another for himself, there was real nobility.

His action set the key of the day to cheerfulness. My new toothpaste had come, too. On my way to look up my pork-knockers I investigated a neat little range of purply-green hills who lived down that way. I climbed the natural ladder tree vines afford to get a lovely pale mauve bolea orchid, five blossoms on the plant, three inches across, very queer flower, the first I ever saw in bloom. Incidentally I found a nice toy of a bird's nest on a branch overhanging a creek, wonderful work, the outside all finished with fresh moss. It looked as if it had been dropped from some high tree. A chipper little brown bird lived there with three dull eggs, white with brown spots, so I did not like to disturb it. When I reached my tributers, they were enthusiastic about the prospects of the north end of the new property. The head tributer had quite a little royalty for me, which was comfortable in my emptyish Scotch jeans.

On my way to join the boys, who had laid out some prospecting in quite another corner of the tract, I walked over and patted a splendid

lumpy "mountain." I drank deep of the curiously-fascinating rank half-sweet odor of the Bush, really the smell of decaying vegetation, but not revolting. Down beyond the edge of the hill where the ground stretched flat away for miles, I found a love of a waterfall. The water was crystal clear—so white it was scarcely "blue"—the rock work behind covered with courageous climbing mosses and ferns. I was heart-tired. I felt myself surely a free man to be able to enjoy it.

Would I find more gold and make good after all? I left my puzzle to chance. I undressed on the black basalt rock. The light shimmered down through the deep clear pool in shafts. I was far deeper than it looked. About fifteen feet with lovely clean white sand as a reflector. I love being in bubbly water "au naturel." I dived. I went down to the very bottom, collared a big stone, put it on my lap to keep me down, and sat as long as I could watching the bubbles collect on me. When I was quite "out of air," I let the stone slip off my "lap" and whizzed up. Then I rested tranquilly. I lay flat on my back and gazed up into a tree festooned with crow-sized weaver birds' nests which were jam-full of squeaking babies. I had

carried a deep inner distress. Now I was quite detached from all immense bothers. What is the good of philosophy if one can't shut with a snap the trouble-drawers in one's mind?

I whistled as I took up my way toward the boys again, and we prospected religiously, genally keeping an eye out for a good camp site. Places were easy to find but all of them uncheerful, which would not do at this juncture. A shut-down, abandoned gold miner's camp ground, where shortly before all has been bustle and excitement, cannot be classified as a stimulating atmosphere for busted Bush-foolish gold seekers, and I was determined not to let my courage slump.

Getting into the vicinity of Dolly-town and knowing that at least the flood would not have affected its general appearance, I determined to roost there for a couple of nights. Wandering up the creek-bed trail, it was extraordinary to think what force this at present ankle-deep trickle of water had previously developed. It looked so innocent and clear-eyed. But a young deer still remained hung high in the crotch of a rosewood tree, evidently drowned and swept there by the flood, to convince one that this streamlet really was responsible for splintering

forest trees, playing marbles with ton's-weight boulders, washing all the exposed rock surfaces as painfully clean as Sunday Philadelphia's matutinal doorsteps, short-cutting through new channels where formerly it had rounded corners with grace.

Turning a bend and peering ahead, I saw that which made me gasp. Holy cats! Was I never to get over being involved in Garlic Jones-ish tunnels! I stared down-creek from the old tunnel where there had once been a great landslide, so great that the forest trees had remained standing straight up in their new location exactly as if they had grown there. All this had now been washed away on account of a cathedral-sized boulder having become dislodged from the opposite hill. It had fallen into the creek-bed, forming a temporary dam. Where the landslide had formerly been was now a sheer bank! Across the face of this abrupt cliff a network of quartz stringers, ornamental in themselves and possibly very useful, caused me a distinct thrill, but still more exciting was a newly-exposed, well-timbered, well-constructed tunnel mouth up considerably above normal flood-mark.

With hearts distinctly pumping we promptly

got over there to find that the entrance was a sheer ten feet above us. We must get in. We played at acrobats. I, standing in the water, hoisted Dick on my shoulders and we pushed and shoved stiff-boned old Ban upon Dick's shoulders and so into the aperture. Passing up Dick's red sash to him we dug toe-holes in the bank, and so were soon in the mouth. This was a real man-sized tunnel, made by a miner who knew his work. So far as we could see it was in a good state of preservation, being well leveled with a view to drainage, thus preserving the timbers.

We were none of us in proper mood to go back to our packs and get a lantern. No. Two boxes of matches would help us to get an idea as to the possibilities of our discovery. So we dived into the darkness. With one hand following the wall and one on the roof, we made slow but satisfactory progress. We distinctly mounted all the time. By economical use of matches held high above our heads we were able to see dimly that there was no immediate danger of a roof-fall. Groping, one's hand slid over kaolin walls, encountering every now and then a quartz stringer. We were more economical of matches than was quite wise—in

the blackness I crashed over a sizable object. Dick, doubtful of finding much left of me, was at hand in an instant to collect the pieces.

Our tiny flare showed us we had fallen over an old wooden barrow. After I was extricated it took many a precious match to thoroughly examine it. I wanted to determine its age and moral character. I made out some scratches. Words were no good at trying to express my feelings when I saw the initials G. J. on the front board. Had we really found Garlic Jones' working? It seemed impossible—yet why not?

No cats' eyes ever glistened in the dark more lustrously than ours did. My heart, at least, was working like an air compressor getting ready for business. Then out of the downy black came Ban's voice:

"Excuse me, sir, but I am beginning to think that there might be some truth in that fierce quartz story you brought back from London."

Dick cursed him roundly for ever having doubted the Chief's good hopes. In turn Ban threatened Dick with "under-cooked bean soup that will give you tummyache for the rest of your natural life."

In my own private bones I felt it was all too

idiotic. I had long ago given up any idea of really finding Garlic. Rubbing the worst of my get-at-able cuts and bruises I declined to argue and worked my mole-ish way on with limps. Spurs may be good for horses, but rusty nails do not hurry people. On up, two hundred yards fully from the mouth; here the air was really stale. It gave me a shocking headache. But the adventure was so amusing I loved it, and was prepared to endure more.

It did have an ending, this tunnel, in a great open cavern in the heart of the mountain. I made out with a catch in my throat a square, fat and wickedly old-looking iron box. *The* box! What did it contain? Heads bumping, hands entwining, feet interfering, we three lustful gold seekers fingered the metal chest over, searching for some hand-hold by which to judge its weight and possible contents. Nothing but flakes of rust to cut into the quick of one's nail did we find. But I sat on it! And knew in my marrow-bones that no matter how it came out, gold-mining plus treasure-hunting was the finest profession in the world.

To stumble out of the mouth of the tunnel, to lower Ban so that he could go and fetch a lantern, to haul him up and get back to that

iron box, took many years! Still, at last we did get there, and when we arrived in the cavern all three of us cursed our luck that we did not qualify as first-class safe-blowers. A week from town and tools, the problem of getting inside a cube of solid, rust-encrusted iron with no chink showing put more than a couple of gray hairs in my head.

As we three begrimed individuals turned the box over, the dull, fat thud that we felt more than heard was delightfully thrilling. A rattle would have been disconcerting. No, it was just an aggravating thud. We held a council of war as to what was to be done. Our first excitement having abated, we admitted that we all had appalling headaches. Our treasure chest must be got to the open air.

As we soon found out, it was too long a job to roll a box two hundred yards, so we sallied out once again. This time, Ban and Dick were lowered out of our pirate's cave to cut two poles which, fastened together, we could use as sled runners. They worked splendidly. By the aid of fire, water, kerosene oil, two pick-axes and a wedge, the event occurred; the box was opened. We peered. We breathlessly pulled and hauled. Inside—no treasure. But that box

did belong to Garlic Jones. First stout volumes, treatises. There were bundles of his papers. Rolls of maps of G. J.'s travels. The original draft of his will. Very stupid! Detailed plans of the organization of the Home for Inveterate Miners. Nothing but papers! He had probably shoved the old box he used as a safe into the tunnel because he thought he might come back some day and it was so heavy to cart around. Then I looked about. Garlic didn't even seal the tunnel on purpose, probably. The bank had once been undermined by the river and blocked the tunnel mouth just as it now had exposed it. Furthermore, examination showed no ore. The place was worked out.

Ban remarked disgustedly: "H'm, and I left Barbados instead of staying quietly at home and growing sugar-cane! Of course, sir, I have always been thought mad, sir."

Dick cocked his head on one side and retorted, "In my opinion it is a serious question whether a Surinam gold-digger could be more brainless than a Barbadian sugar-planter."

If I had been taking old Garlic seriously I should have felt like the 26th of December in a real live mining-camp—the awfulest day in the world between headache, stomachache, heart-

ache, repentance and wonderful resolutions. I would have been likening myself unto undesirable un-drawing-room-like equines, I suppose. But as it was, I grinned. It really was a joke catching up with that old swashbuckler, Garlic, at all. Of course if he had only left a few pounds of bullion in the chest or a few hundredweight of that super-select gold quartz for me so that I could have realized a few thousand dollars by the sale, I would have had reason to sprout a luxuriant fresh growth of curly hair on my semi-bald, getting-grayer, seemingly hollow knob. But considering the luck of most treasure hunters I decided I was extraordinarily fortunate to have found even a trace of what I had started for and to have had all the thrills of discovery without the shocks. I had found *the* box! Just think of that!

My boys, veritable children in such matters, really suffered from disappointment, and partly to avoid watching their faces I went through the papers carefully. There, right on top of a pile, was the wanted receipt to which Garlic had referred in the papers the lawyer mentioned. Old Garlic and I seemed to keep books in about the same manner. One bundle of receipts. One bundle of unpaid bills—being scarcely decent,

these were as they should be, wrapped up carefully so as not unnecessarily to offend the eye. As near as I could make out, despite all his money, old Garlic had lived pretty thin in the Bush. So many gross of plaited garlic, a few gross of second-class sardines guaranteed to give a camel ptomaine-poisoning in all his seven stomachs, beans, rice, and puncheons and hogsheads of rum! I read these items through pensively and handed the bill in question to Ban.

Producing the famous gold spectacles, this time from a hip pocket of his trousers, which pocket was located behind his knee, owing to his wearing at the moment a pair of my old pants which he told me he had had remade for him, but really from which only two feet of the legs had been cut off, he proceeded to read learnedly, going through his horrible, flea-catching-camel contortions to get the correct focus. He consumed these lengthy lists to the bitter end. Looking at me reproachfully, he remarked:

"It would be grand to be personal servant of a gentleman like that, sir."

I was frightfully upset. I had always thought he was pretty well treated with me. I could

see that somehow I was seriously lacking in his estimation.

"By the piper who played before Moses, Ban, will you please tell me what I've done? How soon, you cane-chewing monstrosity, are you going to sack me?"

"Well, sir, if you'll excuse me, you've forbidden me the privilege of having garlic in camp. I knew all the time, sir, that plenty of garlic gives a man a fine Bush mind. It's no wonder, sir, that Mr. Jones came by his prime good fortune."

Fireworks occurred. From the extreme glorification of the atmosphere, Ban took it deep to heart that I still was determined that a mouthful of garlic would be the cause of his death and any insinuated in my food would cause him great agony. I would rather be poor and lose my Bush mind than to have garlic anywhere about me. I like pleasing odors so much that —this is a marrow-bone secret—I often have lavender or dried rose leaves put into my pillows and my trunk to kill the stuffy smell. This is sign of a Me which I once killed with much pain and difficulty. Perhaps it is not quite dead? At any rate, Ban, impudently seizing the luckiest occasion I had ever given him,

An Indian girl at home.

had gone a bit too far with his suggestion of garlic!

I shoved the whole bunch of "decayed vegetation"—papers—disgustedly into the northwest corner of my prospecting bag. To get a change of air and to secure needed food for all of us, I left the boys to continue prospecting and went to stop again over night in my own camp with the Indians and to hunt with Woonta in the early morning. It was very stormy after I got to their little country, so well hidden in the sheltering Bush. In about fifteen minutes food was ready, baked game and fish of all kinds, well cooked in mud ovens, and stews prepared in clay pots with various odd vegetables, most of them wild Bush vegetation which few know are good to eat. But these people live well; they eat clean food well prepared. One was expected to drink palm "brandy." A one per cent solution makes me perspire in every pore. I, prudent fellow, and as a great treat, presented peppermint extract. This, if taken neat, is very awakening? I took mine with lots of water and wanted more. Peppermint is so expensive it was always presented in very small doses. Ordinary spirit they would not look at.

When every one had eaten all he could the

women of the household brought each person a small calabash of water, and one then and there cleansed one's teeth with one's index finger. Then stools were arranged in a circle and we talked as fast and as long as we could, but not loud. If one had been out hunting one was always rubbed down with a native oil made from the seed of the all-useful palm. I never got so far because I am frightfully ticklish and would have squeaked for sure. Besides it would have been a bit embarrassing for me to allow a perfectly proper young damsel to fuss around like that. Though she would think nothing of it, I am disgustingly civilized and have a "cultured" mind. Still, I couldn't help it. It was there.

At or before the quick enveloping dusk I went into my hut. I lowered the mat. I looked at the hammock—on occasion even bowed to it. Then I spread my loin cloth on the floor, making a bundle to resemble a pillow. It seemed very natural for me to lie down on a clay floor all undressed and with a day's hunting before me. And yet my soul is so very old. . . . Away before daylight a girl arrived with a calabash of cumboe palm cocoa (another kind of palm at last!). Extraordinarily nourish-

ing the stuff is, also quite delicious. I was always awake before she came and she found me quite tidy and dressed and in my hammock, head and legs at the right angles and beastly uncomfortable. Then I washed a little, the water very chilly from contact with the cold baked clay and palm basin. Outside there was no one to be seen, but before I had been out of my hut two minutes my hunting partner arrived. A few hours of observing wonders of skill followed. Before the morning was really old we returned to the village, weighed down by game.

I had enjoyed myself so much that I gave the old Chief a gun I had always intended he should have. He was exceedingly pleased. Only he did not like it being "blued" as all guns are against rust. He called out the wife brigade and had them scour it with sand until it shone. He explained that it was not good for guns to be blue, since it made them die sooner and he offered to have my own pet gun cleaned. Then I made an awful break, as I told him that I had no wives to keep on scouring my gun even if his did begin it right. A generous light appeared in his eye and he called me into his big hut. There, instanter, he had

young female relatives. For a solemn hour he passed them in revue order before us, making the most un-Grundyish remarks. They took it all as a matter of course, while I made my brain spin overtime weaving a rope to climb out of my silly pitfall on.

Well, the end came and getting up and taking me by the hand he made a very long speech indeed, expatiating on my tallness, size in general and the likelihood of my being a good "spec" all round. Then it was up to me. I did a preliminary song and dance about his great kindness, the honor he was doing me, and so forth and so forth. *But* I had sworn a blood oath to have nothing to do with any lady, howsoever lovely, until I had found what I was looking for. That was a piece of gold as big as his family "Gaddo."

Now, a blood oath is a frightfully serious thing with those people. One cuts a gash on both one's breasts, then one squats before the "Gaddo" with one's hands crossed, right hand on left breast and left hand on right. One takes the oath and while doing so places one's blood-stained hands on the knees of the "Gaddo." This was, thank goodness, quite

satisfactory to the old boy. Personally I am pretty well over the man-and-woman stage. The only thing on God's green earth I have to fly from is a nice pretty woman in distress or trouble of any kind. Gee whiz! That is where I get into all sorts of pickles and now and then rather serious ones too. I concentrate all of me on being my nicest to them. I don't mean to make love or anything like that, but still, afterwards I realize that I have been going along at an awful pace. And then it is suddenly a case of:

"Oh, darling, I can't do without your——" Och, Och! as the Scotch say. It is involving.

I took the Chief over to my camp. Ban produced much to eat. We fed and talked of heaps of things. Like most of "my nation" he is a real human being. As companions in the Bush they are all wonderfully interesting. But I can keep my owns guns clean.

When I got back with the food the boys had nothing of consequence to report and I sent them in one direction, taking another myself. That day I walked down the bed of a creek I had finished working a good while before.

All the way up to the very head we had found quartz gravel and sometimes big boulders with

very good-looking visible gold in it. Nice-looking gold, not worn nor smooth as if it had been rolled about in the bottom of the creek-bed for ages while it was washed down from some far-away point, but as though from the immediate neighborhood, quite new. I had looked the banks over pretty carefully. None of us had found anything the least interesting. I did not now, but it puzzled me because I saw so many wasps here and there along them. I have a private superstition in the back of my mind that these tropical wasps or marabontas always make their nests near something man would like to get and that he will not be able to approach on account of their stings.

The next day was a quiet Sunday. Every camp job was done, such as books posted, etc., —alas there was not much to post!—when I suddenly fell to thinking over this creek and the way it behaved. Shoving my small pestle, mortar and prospecting pick into my shoulder bag, I started off, gold battel worn as a hat, gun and cutlass along, of course. I went over hill and dale till I reached that creek and prowled up the bed very slowly. Near the top, two brilliant humming birds, almost as minute as bees, came buzzing round my head. I must

be near their nest or they would not be so brave. I was not in any hurry. Why should I be? I like studying humming birds' family parties. Finding a flat rock I sat down and kept perfectly quiet. They continued to fizz and vibrate in front of my eyes for some time like two animated emeralds. Then they remembered an overdue date with a very honeyful flower. So, forgetting me, or that I still could move, they vanished down the creek like two light flashes.

Knowing their ways, I sat motionless. Very soon I saw one returning—same old hurry. Just opposite me he wheeled and settled on a tree fern's stalk. Cocking his head from side to side to see that all was well, he fluttered and then hovered at the extreme end of the nearest fern frond to me. *Why* had I not seen his nest? It was there, now that I had been shown, as clear as anything could be. A tiny cone of moss and finest bark fiber. I stood up and gently pushed my way through the undergrowth of the steep bank so as to be able to get hold of the huge frond and have a look at close quarters at the nest and its contents. My hand was on the nest when I was stabbed in the neck, arms, shoulders by wasps galore.

Stepping back quickly my heel caught in a rock crevice, and I landed in a pleasingly deep and large pool in the creek-bed! Under water things were cooler. I stopped as long as I could, and after coming up for the fourth time I was glad to hear that every wasp was off guard.

I was still tingling from the stings. Mad too, as I was not one bit guilty. I soon located the wasps' nest, a huge cone-shaped affair. Plenty of people at home to make it worth while! With a match from my waterproof box, I lit a big bunch of good dry fern and placed it directly under the nest's entrance. It was most humanly satisfying to hear the wasps come out and go "fizz" into the fire. Very healing to my burning neck.

Then I saw that the ground was catching fire as well. That does not matter here as the Bush is always too damp to burn far.

But that fire showed me what the wasps had been hiding—doing sentry guard on. It exposed to view a great vein of quartz, a solid big body. The odd part of the story is that on returning to camp and telling Dick what I had found, he said that he too had seen the wasps and had passed up on the other side of the

creek as fast as he could. Moral to the story: Always look for values via love of humming birds and natural history. Even good for a perfectly proper Mining Engineer? It turned out so, decidedly. Within a week we were crushing some pretty useful money out of it, and what was more, it lasted, so that I could see my way before the season should end to pay my creditors, give my four boys a little bonus and at least buy a ticket to a place where fuzz-buzz directors could certainly employ me as "a thoroughly experienced" man to make them a learned report from which they would never imagine I particularly liked to watch clouds drifting or fish wriggling. That gold came just fast enough to allow me to continue to extract treasure-wealth of other sorts from the Bush I should have to leave.

One day, soon after I discovered the Marabonta mine, I waded across the creek to have a look at some gravel on the bank on the other side. The splashing I made flushed a big flock of kami-kami. Was there ever such luck! Now I should see a little more of the trumpeters' unknown story. This was a real find. They went off hissing and drumming into the Bush, gray backs and black bodies disappear-

ing out of sight. But there was a patter among the dry leaves louder than arriving army ants make. All new noises in the Bush have to be investigated. Dashing forward through the scrub growth, I got glimpses here and there of little gray-brown, black-striped, kami-kami children hastening violently after their mamas and papas. No scientist or layman had ever been able to tell me what the babies were like.

My legs are very long, their legs were very short. I was soon in the middle of where they must be. Not a chick to be seen! I always pick low-bush cranberries sitting on the ground. I hate stooping. I knew the chicks were there. Sitting down, I turned the leaves over into my right hand, holding my hat butterfly-net fashion in my left. To make a very long search-story short, in half an hour I had only nine, so extraordinarily provided are they by nature with withered-leaf-and-grass-colored plumage. But I did sit on one. And hated myself violently. The nine eventually arrived at my head camp and temporarily lodged in one of my high Bush boots, with foster-parent Ban in solicitous attendance. Later they throve on ants and angle worms. They used to greet me on my return to camp with their quaint booming

or hissing cry. They even became disgustingly tame and apparently were possessed of the unalterable conviction that my bed was the only place they could sleep with any comfort. As birthday presents to friends in town they were serviceable. Nothing in my whole search could have pleased me more than actually to have owned these birdlings, not to be known through the wisest of books. Not even the unusual experience of eating steaks from a giant armadillo the boys brought in, great luck for us in our need for economical provisioning.

Treasure too was my closer knowledge of the Indians. In time I covenanted deeply with these Surinam friends. Toward the day's end I would go to them. There would be greetings, chaff. Then a hush; for no apparent reason things would become even quieter than ever, if possible. Why this suspension of the thread of affairs? The old Chief walked about quite undisturbed, yet there was a distinct expectancy. It seemed in the air. Why? Just because it was near sun-setting time and the "Gaddo" is then on the move. Like the big game in the Bush all things change their ways at sunset. As the sun touched the big branches of the surrounding trees all the older men, the

upper ten, walked toward the earthen platform of their great "Gaddo," who is seated in a nice comfy attitude on a mud-stool. The young men and boys kept well behind. I did too at first. Later I was expected to go with the elders right up on the raised circle. I went quite willingly. The general atmospheric conditions felt Godful like, that is, to me. Why not? They go there to speak to God.

I knew enough of their language to follow their prayers. They were very practical and straightforward.

"The weather is dry, the game is far in the deep Bush. Without rain we will die. If you mean to kill us do not do it by starvation, do it quickly." We prayed for a heavy dew or a light rain to take the crackle out of the leaves, so that we might hunt food to keep us alive. Lots of other things were prayed for. Some made one smile inwardly; some made one wonder that a soul so far advanced along "the Road" should be there.

Then, without criticizing each other's clothes, wives or husbands, or envying new styles, we evaporated through the camp. My participation in this covenant was to me rare privilege. It awarded me friendship-sealed memories of

real folk, of strong and simple faith, treasure which permanently enriches.

The time came when a cable summoned me from the magical Bush of a thousand lights and shadows where I had often walked in inner serenity no matter what my outward trials, among marvels of flowers and birds and beasts, with everything to gratify an avid curiosity. I had had this great wealth and I would again. Now I was to be empowered to explore new lands where perchance one might find still other far views glorified by illusion, which lead one on to repeated tests of reality and unreality, no less a promise of satisfaction to that mysticism which throbs in the nature of those really fully alive. I tried to forecast the blank mass of time ahead. I searched for a vista and detail of my path, wishing for perspective.

I laughed. As usual when one has attained an end it is time to go after something else. I had guessed a few fascinating Bush riddles. I had even extracted from the breast of the earth some secrets of her most intimate relations, some quantity of that essence of nature which permanently compensates the spirit. My pockets were not quite empty. I had learned much of bird, beast and man. Neither poorer

deeply gratified that from the tropic's guarded chests I had been granted adequate treasure to progress along my Road, and had been privileged to discover the utter glory and wonder which leads one's soul under the glamourful, satisfying, understanding spell I have called Enchantment.

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